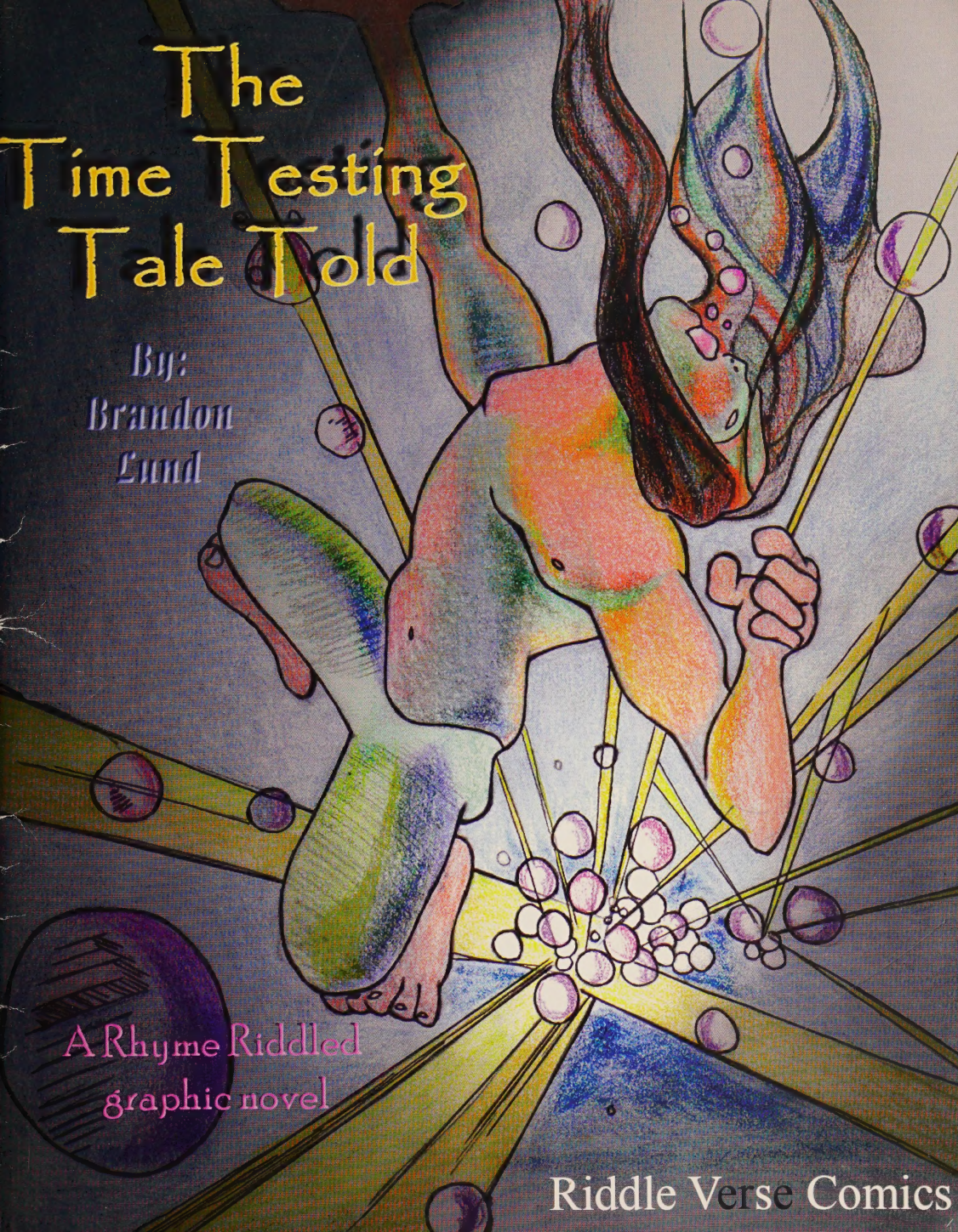


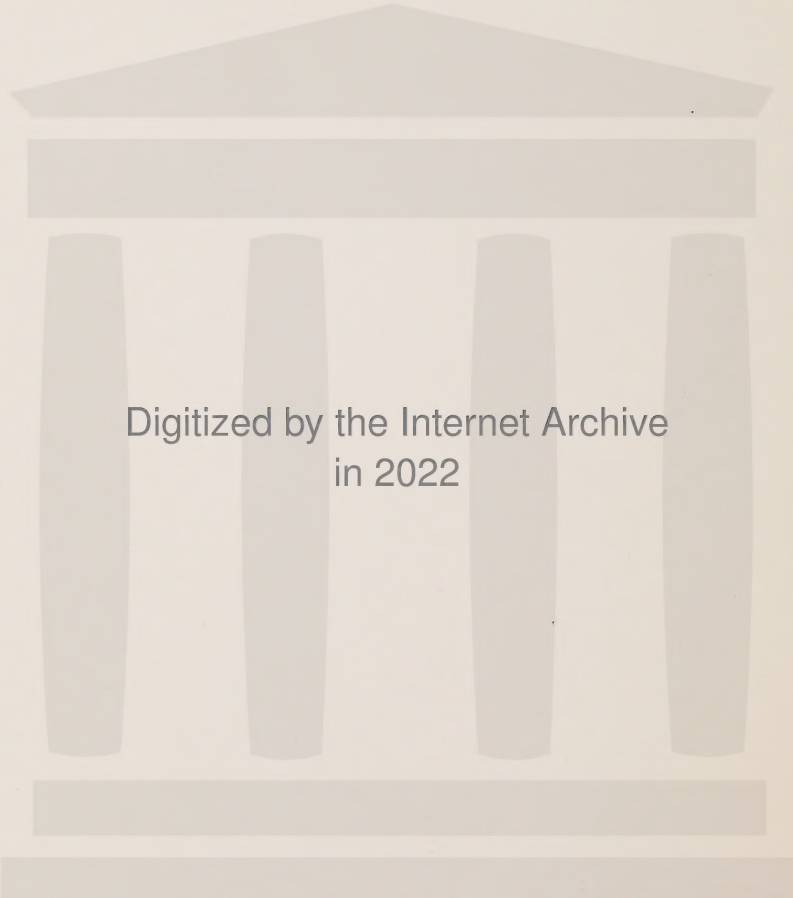
The Time Testing Tale Told

By:
Brandon
Lund

A Rhyme Riddled
graphic novel

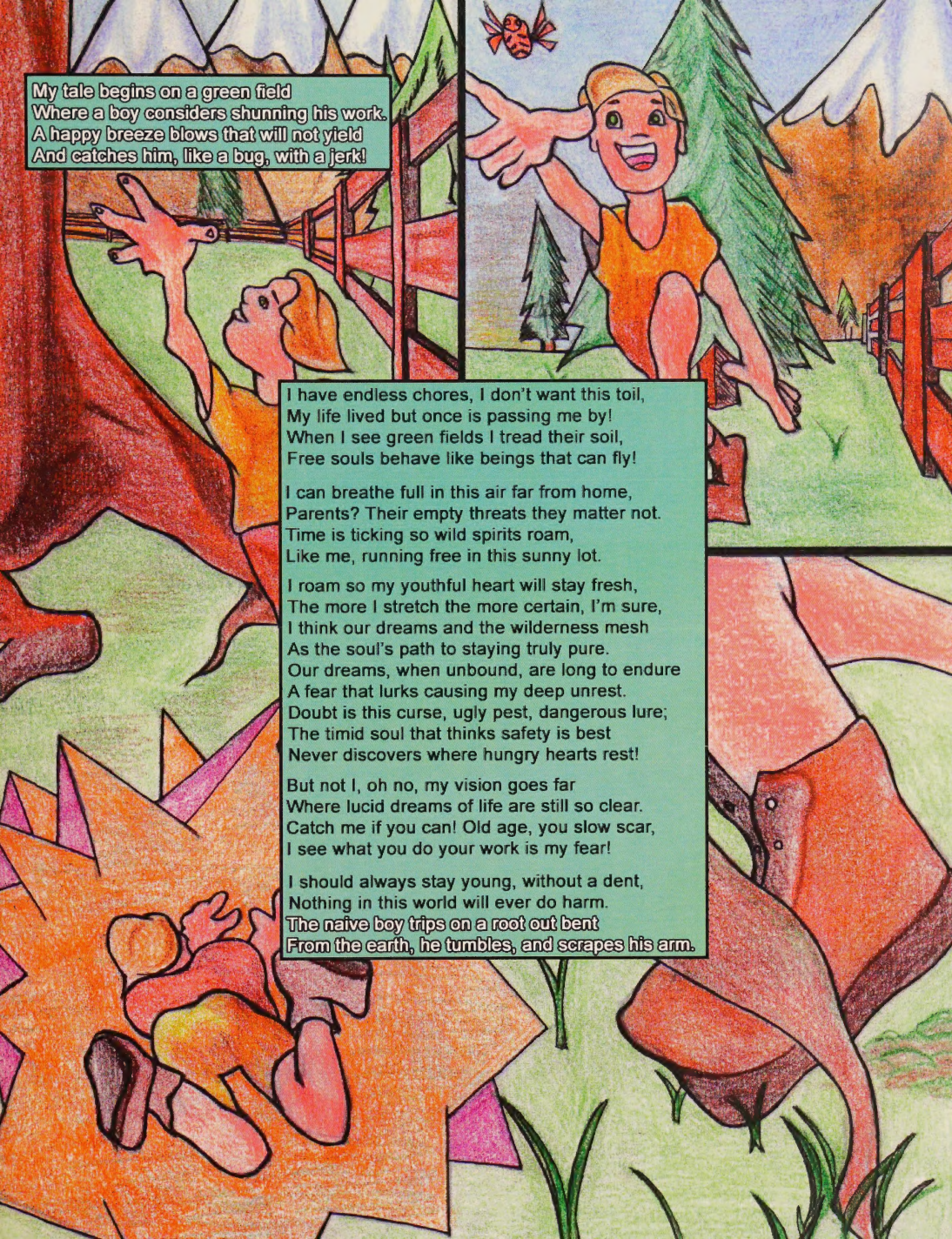
Riddle Verse Comics





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My tale begins on a green field
Where a boy considers shunning his work.
A happy breeze blows that will not yield
And catches him, like a bug, with a jerk!

I have endless chores, I don't want this toil,
My life lived but once is passing me by!
When I see green fields I tread their soil,
Free souls behave like beings that can fly!


I can breathe full in this air far from home,
Parents? Their empty threats they matter not.
Time is ticking so wild spirits roam,
Like me, running free in this sunny lot.

I roam so my youthful heart will stay fresh,
The more I stretch the more certain, I'm sure,
I think our dreams and the wilderness mesh
As the soul's path to staying truly pure.
Our dreams, when unbound, are long to endure
A fear that lurks causing my deep unrest.
Doubt is this curse, ugly pest, dangerous lure;
The timid soul that thinks safety is best
Never discovers where hungry hearts rest!

But not I, oh no, my vision goes far
Where lucid dreams of life are still so clear.
Catch me if you can! Old age, you slow scar,
I see what you do your work is my fear!

I should always stay young, without a dent,
Nothing in this world will ever do harm.

The naive boy trips on a root out bent
From the earth, he tumbles, and scrapes his arm.



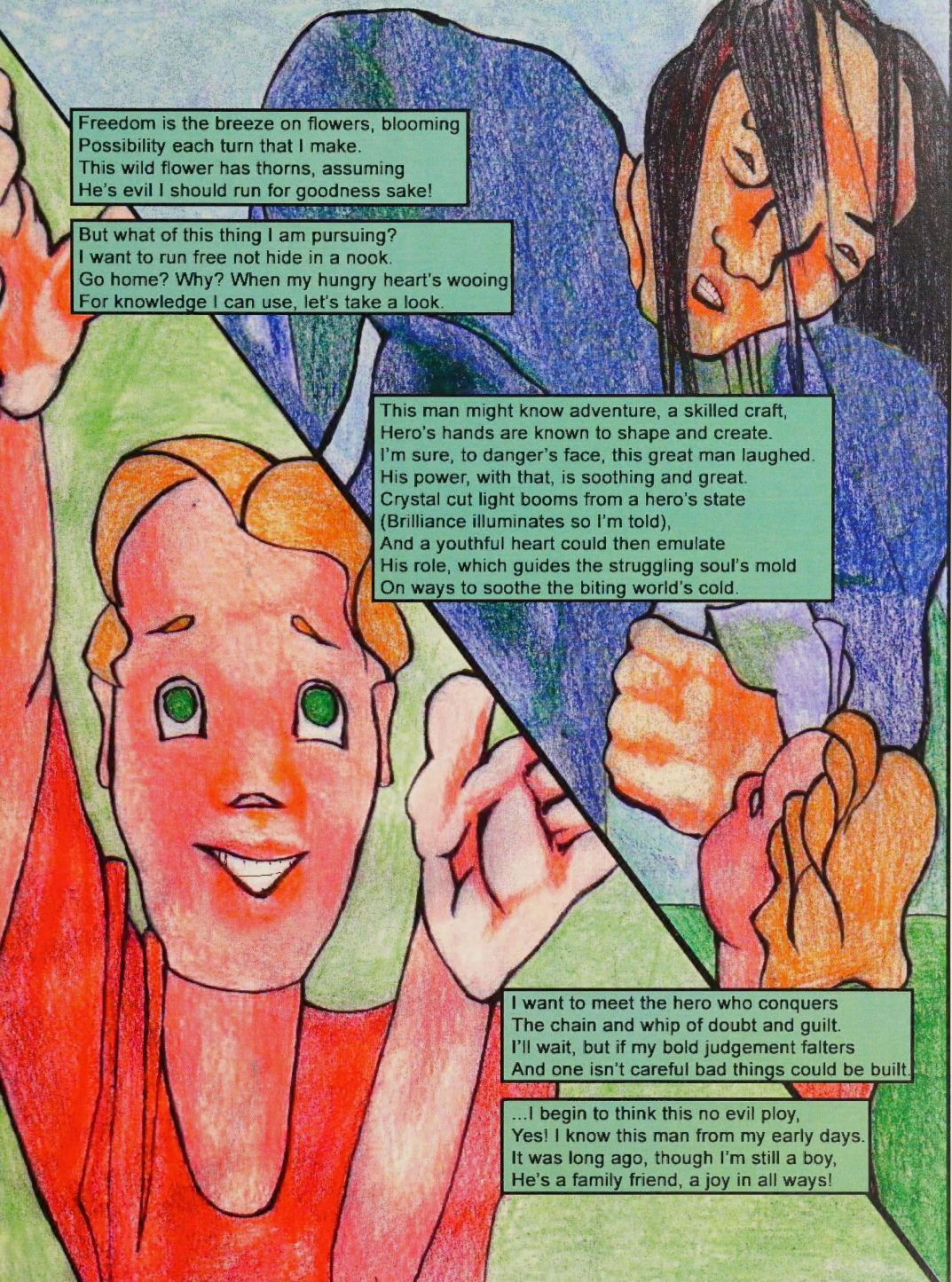
Can it be my dreams had a blunder?
So freedom and pain, the both, can be mixed?
His wild teacher says, "Don't go under
The waves of doubt leaving your craft unfixed.

People grow old when their wild dream stops,
Time's sands pull quick when doubt's plan slowly starts.
Freedom is scary, the sharp knife that crops
This leech that feeds on all hungry young hearts.

Surviving cruel chances should awaken
Your thoughts: Now you know you too can be caught!
So start life with cautious glances taken,
Or sink slow in doubt for reasons known not.
The nature of doubt makes all stink and rot,
Choking you slowly with time's relentless tick.
It smolders your desires burning hot,
Your soul when captured, enchained with a click,
Is a candle flame's fate: airless smoldered quick!

Have you seen the eyes of wild things caught?
Their sad embers only twinkle in doubt.
Their souls drag in chains where once they had fought
For freedom, the thing being done without!"

He's up, back to running, then a new shock!
Unexpectedly he finds someone here.
With a frightened face, he feels like a rock,
Frozen, Should he flee? His home is still near.



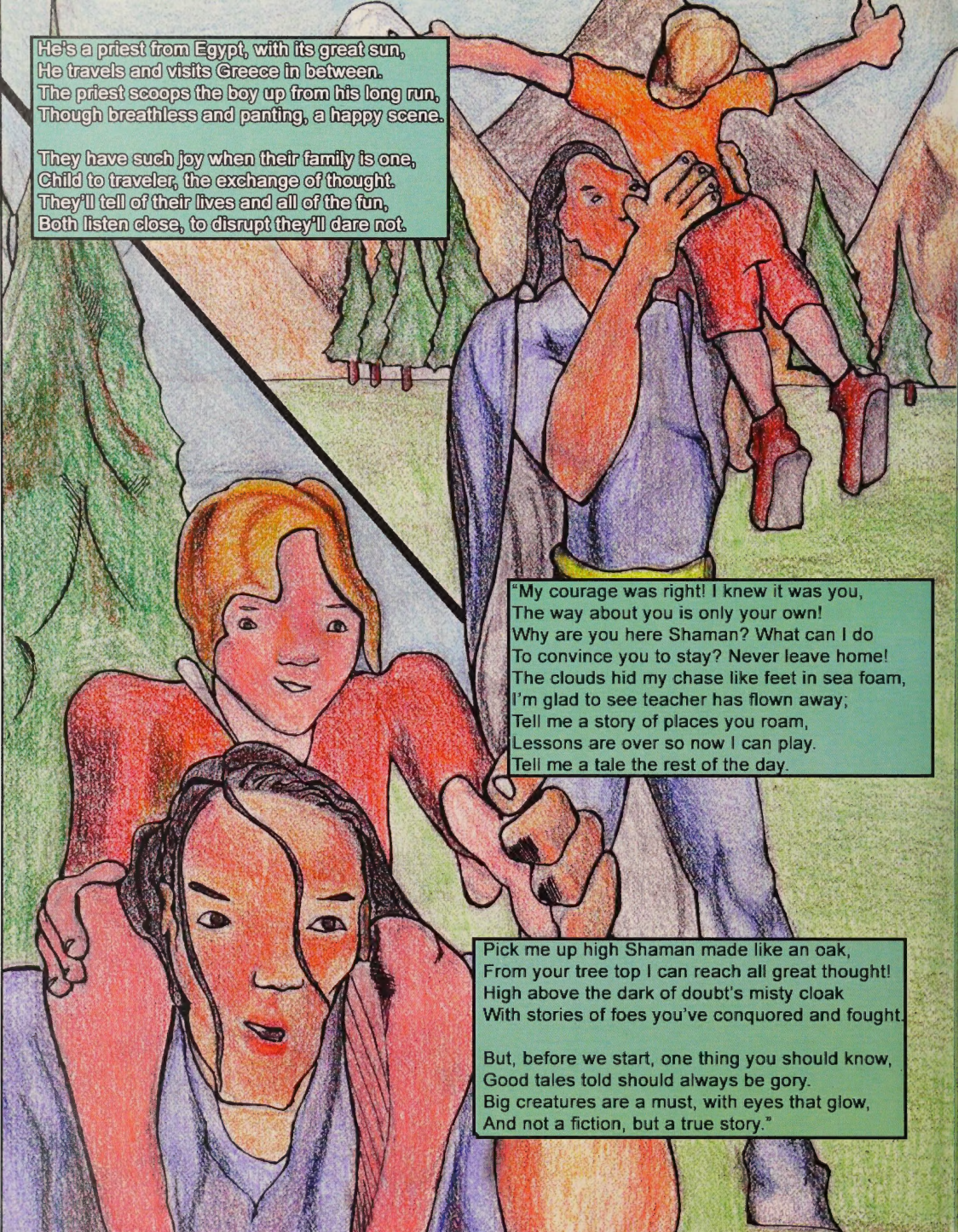
Freedom is the breeze on flowers, blooming
Possibility each turn that I make.
This wild flower has thorns, assuming
He's evil I should run for goodness sake!

But what of this thing I am pursuing?
I want to run free not hide in a nook.
Go home? Why? When my hungry heart's wooing
For knowledge I can use, let's take a look.

This man might know adventure, a skilled craft,
Hero's hands are known to shape and create.
I'm sure, to danger's face, this great man laughed.
His power, with that, is soothing and great.
Crystal cut light booms from a hero's state
(Brilliance illuminates so I'm told),
And a youthful heart could then emulate
His role, which guides the struggling soul's mold
On ways to soothe the biting world's cold.

I want to meet the hero who conquers
The chain and whip of doubt and guilt.
I'll wait, but if my bold judgement falters
And one isn't careful bad things could be built.

...I begin to think this no evil ploy,
Yes! I know this man from my early days.
It was long ago, though I'm still a boy,
He's a family friend, a joy in all ways!



He's a priest from Egypt, with its great sun,
He travels and visits Greece in between.
The priest scoops the boy up from his long run,
Though breathless and panting, a happy scene.

They have such joy when their family is one,
Child to traveler, the exchange of thought.
They'll tell of their lives and all of the fun,
Both listen close, to disrupt they'll dare not.

"My courage was right! I knew it was you,
The way about you is only your own!
Why are you here Shaman? What can I do
To convince you to stay? Never leave home!
The clouds hid my chase like feet in sea foam,
I'm glad to see teacher has flown away;
Tell me a story of places you roam,
Lessons are over so now I can play.
Tell me a tale the rest of the day.

Pick me up high Shaman made like an oak,
From your tree top I can reach all great thought!
High above the dark of doubt's misty cloak
With stories of foes you've conquered and fought.

But, before we start, one thing you should know,
Good tales told should always be gory.
Big creatures are a must, with eyes that glow,
And not a fiction, but a true story."

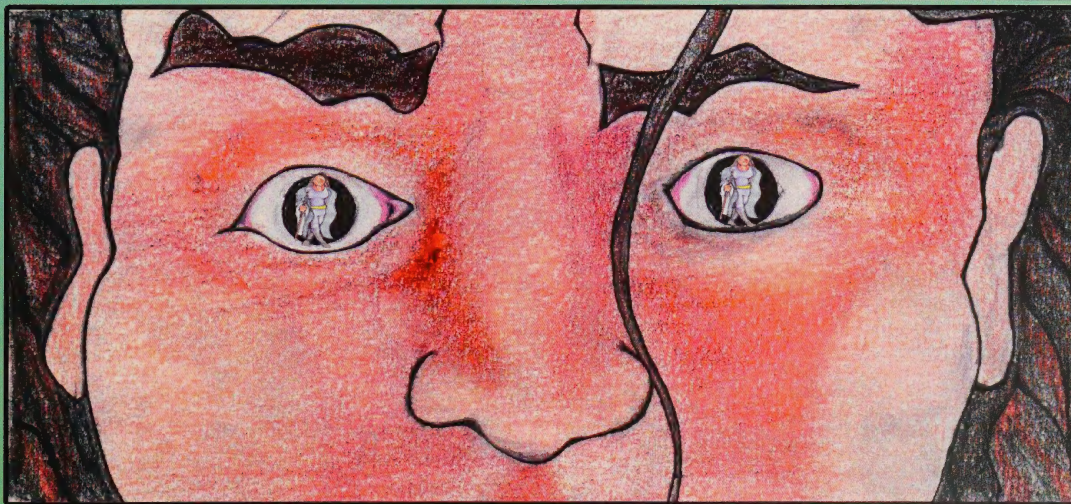
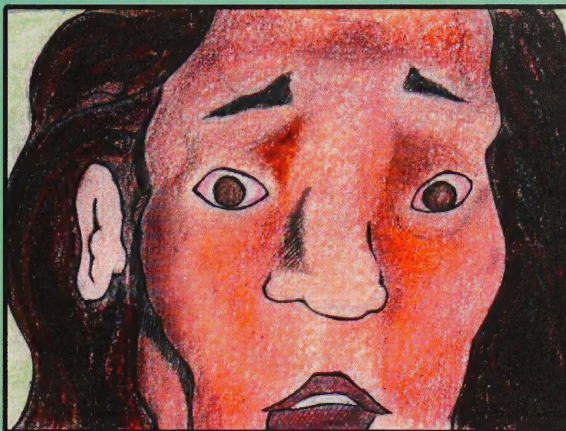
The Shaman laughs loud, kids and their wit,
The thoughts of children so lucid and sound.
Then his posture grows sad, dim pain is lit,
Such somber stories was all his heart found.

The Shaman has been gone for far too long,
To travel too long was hard on his mind.
Life's battles took place, decisions went wrong,
Friends back home are the peace he can find.

"Youthful happy child, so wholly good,
If only you knew how splendid to see
You growing, playing, but misunderstood,
Think not that thrills make adventure bound me.
I travel for work, I travel to be
Alone in deep thought, and I don't look back
Until I'm lost and certain I'm free.
I never grow stale, I don't unpack,
I never see you from out of a sack.

All with a price and mine has cost so dear,
To grow in freedom and live my content.
I missed your birthday, I should have been near,
And help with your studies I could've lent.

Listen to me rant! forgive this sad man,
I'm just so happy to not be apart.
I can get sentimental when I can,
Never mind, a story, where should I start?
Ah! My tales in Greece should please your heart!"



"I've traveled much through this great land of Greece,
Pursuing quiet truth and inner peace.
When I'm in touch time fills up my soul
With proof of the universe's true whole.

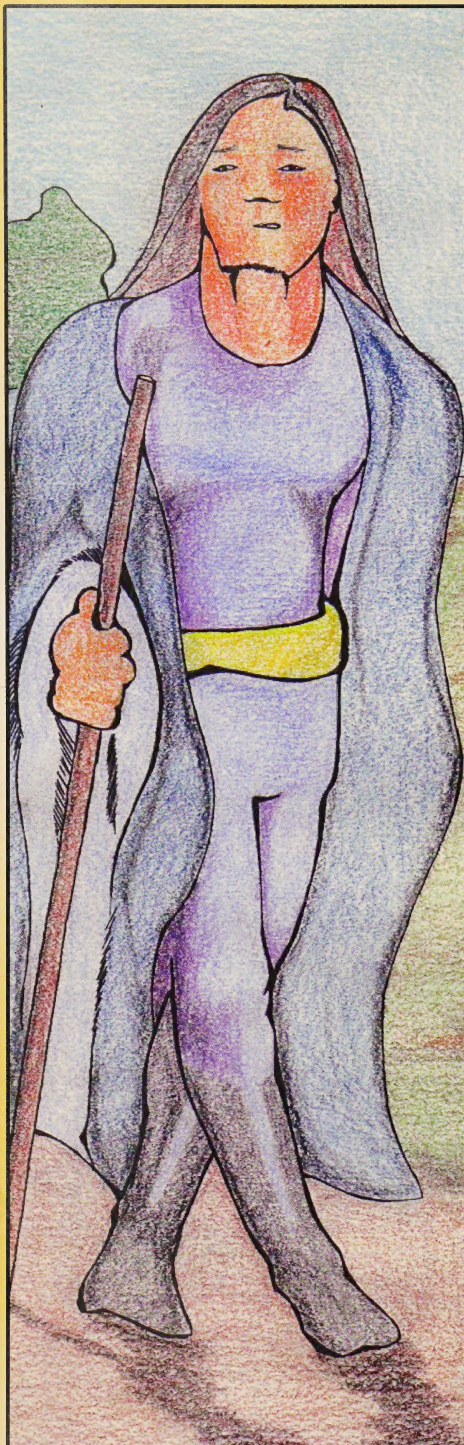
I am thought wise-- no! A storymaker.
Seclusion is a curse, I'm its breaker.
Community is my role, but this reason
Has overwhelmed me with a dark season:

Through all of my travels much I wonder
About achievements when they will sunder.
Even the great works, in time, erode slow,
Although strong lights to live, on them, still glow.

These are sad thoughts for one of my order.
I am a time priest, time is not a border
To seers like me, it is suspended,
But all strength in time goes unamended.

I've been confused, in needed of a kind voice
To tell of a constant I can rejoice.
A fellow time priest, who's dear to my heart,
Served by the sea and was where I would start.

Many things happened as I will soon tell
Between that moment and the tolling of the bell."
**The boy shifts in his seat under the hot sun,
The Time Testing Tale has just begun.**

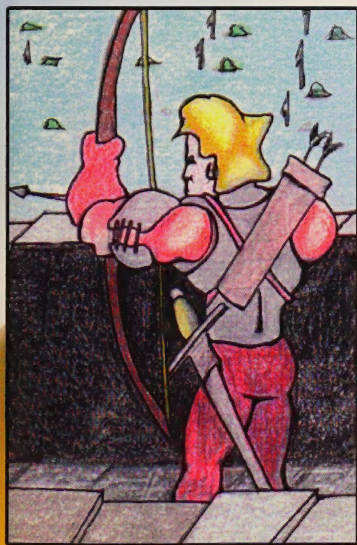
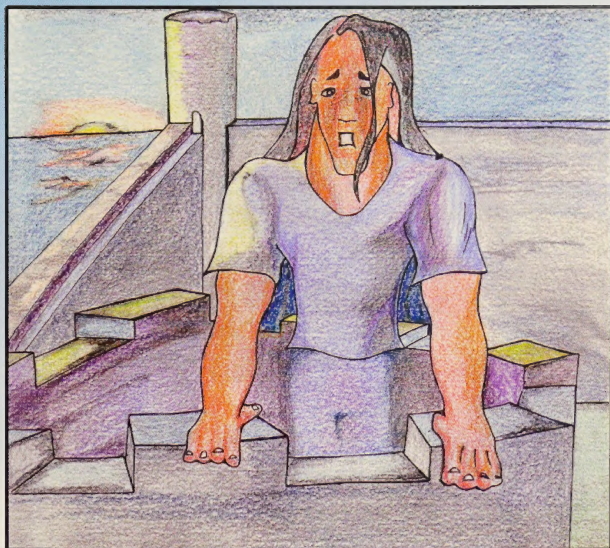


"I traveled to Greece light, each step a bound,
My fear of loss had grown small, then I found
Out my priest friend was gone, some gravel path,
That steered ominous to an idol's wrath.

The bleak news was told to me straight away,
(That she had left home at the break of day).
I had no news, motive, a 'why' or 'how'.
I had questions and wanted answers now.

What was this thing that made my profit roam?
My worries heightened that she would flee home.
Her people were frightened, nobody knew.
I lightened my tone, clarity was due.

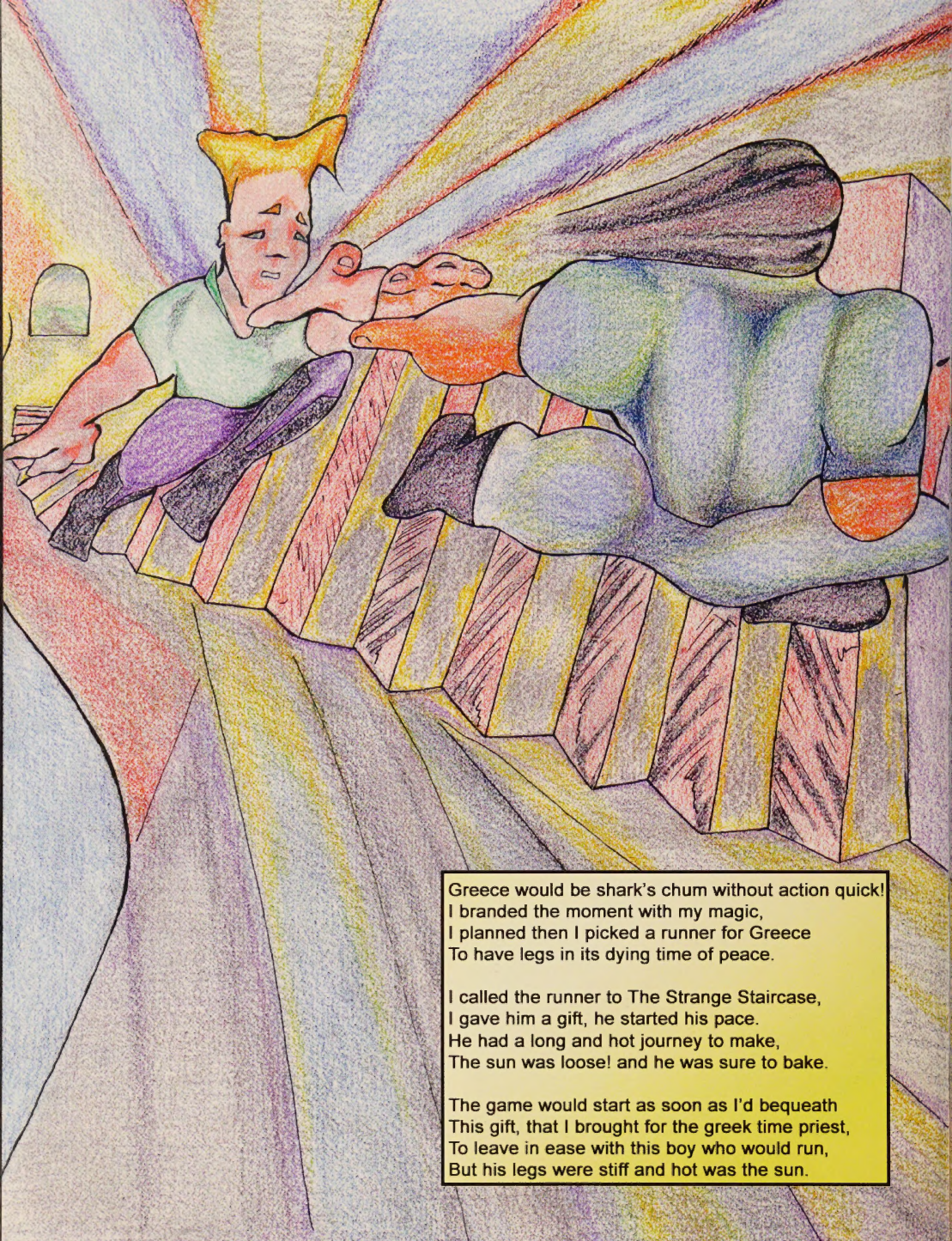
I brooded quiet, 'I need to find out
If evil is near,' I wanted to shout.
Then, glued to a wall, a madman's scrawled fear
Said, 'Look to the sea, upheaval is near!'



I peered to the sea, from the high peak shown
Strange creatures, like weeds, from the sea had grown!
A queer and forboding feeling then cropped,
Rearranging my features, my jaw dropped!

What was going on was total madness,
Though moments ago I was in sadness.
I had no time over my friend to fuss.
The fight to Greece came straight to us!

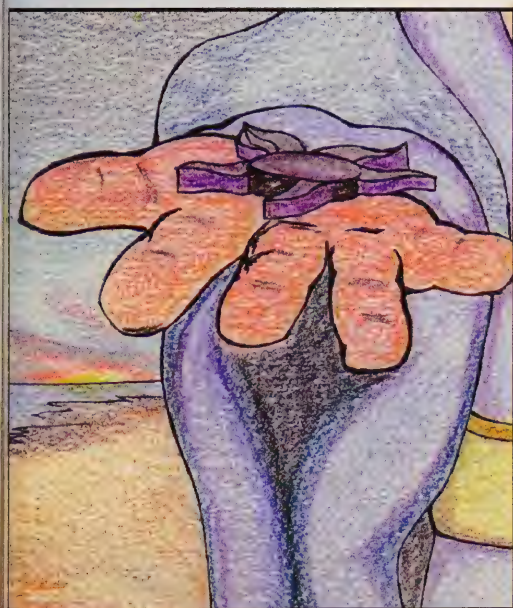
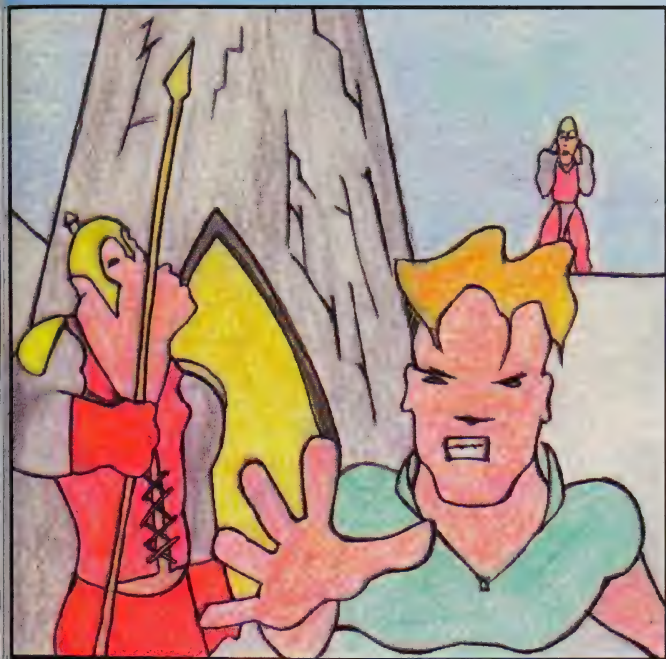
Then scouts' news came: 'They're about to attack!
Like wolves of the sea they've come in a pack!'
With few choices, and much concern, I stared
Across the whole scene discernably scared.



Greece would be shark's chum without action quick!
I branded the moment with my magic,
I planned then I picked a runner for Greece
To have legs in its dying time of peace.

I called the runner to The Strange Staircase,
I gave him a gift, he started his pace.
He had a long and hot journey to make,
The sun was loose! and he was sure to bake.

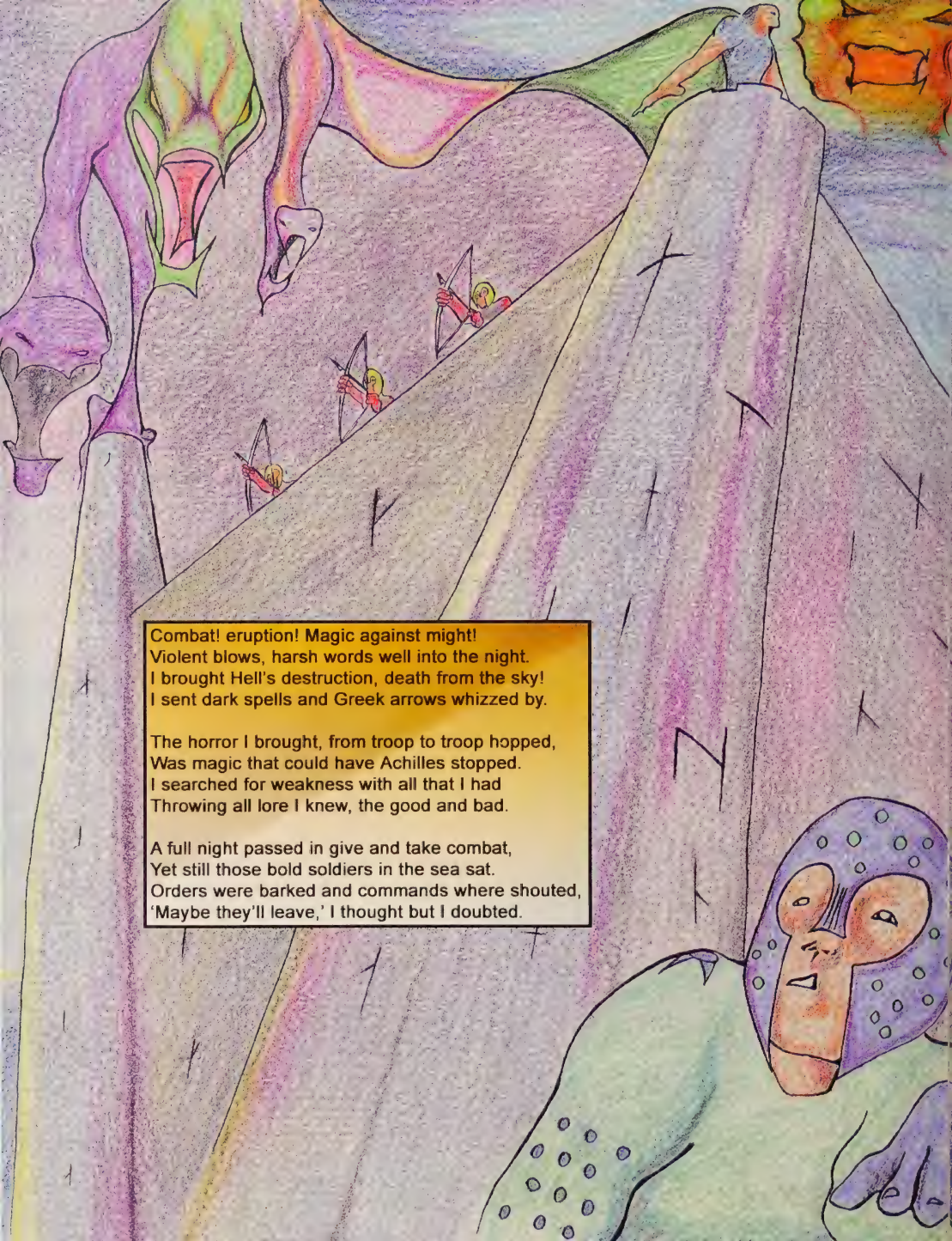
The game would start as soon as I'd bequeath
This gift, that I brought for the greek time priest,
To leave in ease with this boy who would run,
But his legs were stiff and hot was the sun.



The gift was a trick to mask the heartache
That filled my heart to the point it might break.
It wasn't much, though I made it as love
To beam through a dark canopy above.

It seemed important, then not knowing why,
Like rain to a youth that stares at the sky."
Like a street wise kid, all things he sizes,
He smiles though sad the boy surmizes.

"Where was I? A fair breeze blown churned this thought:
'Elementals might buy time for a plot.'
Did I unleash my powers with the sun,
Impedimentless, till my foe was done?"



Combat! eruption! Magic against might!
Violent blows, harsh words well into the night.
I brought Hell's destruction, death from the sky!
I sent dark spells and Greek arrows whizzed by.

The horror I brought, from troop to troop hopped,
Was magic that could have Achilles stopped.
I searched for weakness with all that I had
Throwing all lore I knew, the good and bad.

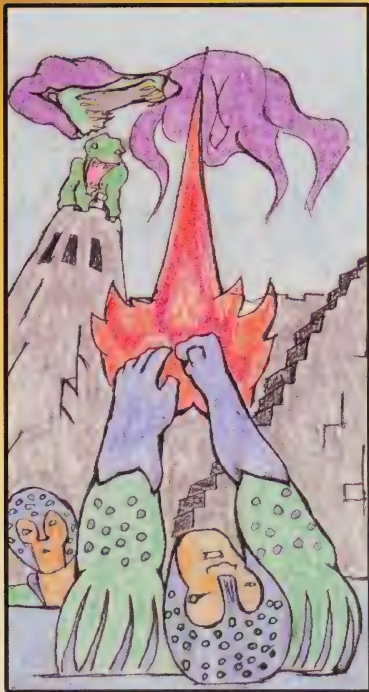
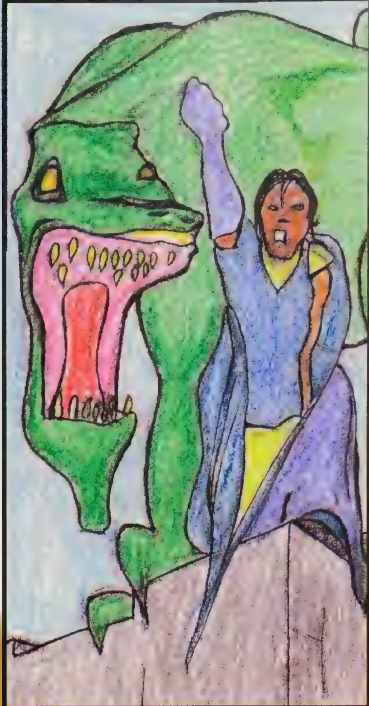
A full night passed in give and take combat,
Yet still those bold soldiers in the sea sat.
Orders were barked and commands where shouted,
'Maybe they'll leave,' I thought but I doubted.

The budding day rose through the hard fought night.
The sun, though soothing, was hard on my sight.
Wave after wave came the same mass of troops.
How could they endure my phantasm's swoops?

My chest heaved and my blood flowed
Blanketing their ranks like grass when it snowed.
My magic had bested armies of yore,
But this tank of sharks still patrolled our shore.

I summoned an elemental of might!
Trying to frighten them with its mere sight.
This plan was experimental, to test
If its presence lightened the Greeks' unrest.

He made things worse! I needed to think quick
As I started to wane and to look sick.
Then, at once, a vision dawned on me hard:
'If they have a king he remains unmarred!'





My cards were trumped by his powerful view
Beneath the waves where his reign could ensue.
My vision grew bleak regarding our fate.
Then it dawned on me, weakness makes bait!

I had waited too long to counter-strike.
This revelation made my heart sink, like
The world's weight on my shoulders had grown,
To fight their king as these bruises have shown.

Bone chilling cold is the deeps of the sea,
The solution was known, the bait was me!
My heart started to fill, I came apart
Like a lost youth in a dangerous mart.

I was deluded, desperately dreaming
For a happy ending. My plan, seeming
To teem with scope, was nothing but a mess,
I escaped alive, barely, I digress.

As a group we would stand or we would fall
As a group to defend the stout Greek wall.
I composed the announcement of this choice
From a good place to project my full voice:

'I have known you all long, and deep is my bond,
But I must leave you below the waves, beyond,
Your comrades are strong, I might not return,
The times are evil, evil's will is stern.

It will turn this land into all that is dead.'
'Our courage is fleeting' the noble men said.
'Dread, it is in your eyes, we are not fools,
Death is waiting in the deep's ocean pools.'

That cooled my will, I hoped they took not note
How scared I looked with a lump in my throat.
'To dote on fear will bring Greece the wrong end,
I remain unshook, my decision won't bend.'



I counted to ten, doom bound jumped shoveless,
I was ocean grabbed with a splash! gloveless
Clammy fingers was each crashing wave.
The sea troops flagged me, no time to be brave.

Save for harsh words the troops left me unharmed.
They slapped on chains from a guard who was armed.
I was alarmed at our rate, fast and deep,
Sunk to still depths were light's rays couldn't seep.

You'd think sinking to Hell would get hotter.
The deeper gone the colder the water.
This deep and still upon my heart weighted dear,
It was eyrie and these people were queer.

When I peered at the troops, they acted odd,
They would twitch strange, I would smile and nod.
Was anything left that could bring some hope?
What it was then was beyond my mind's scope.

splash!



Like the runner's fairing, beyond my sight,
I asked him questions when we could talk light.
His eyes hid beneath his hair when he said
He was beyond tired once his run led

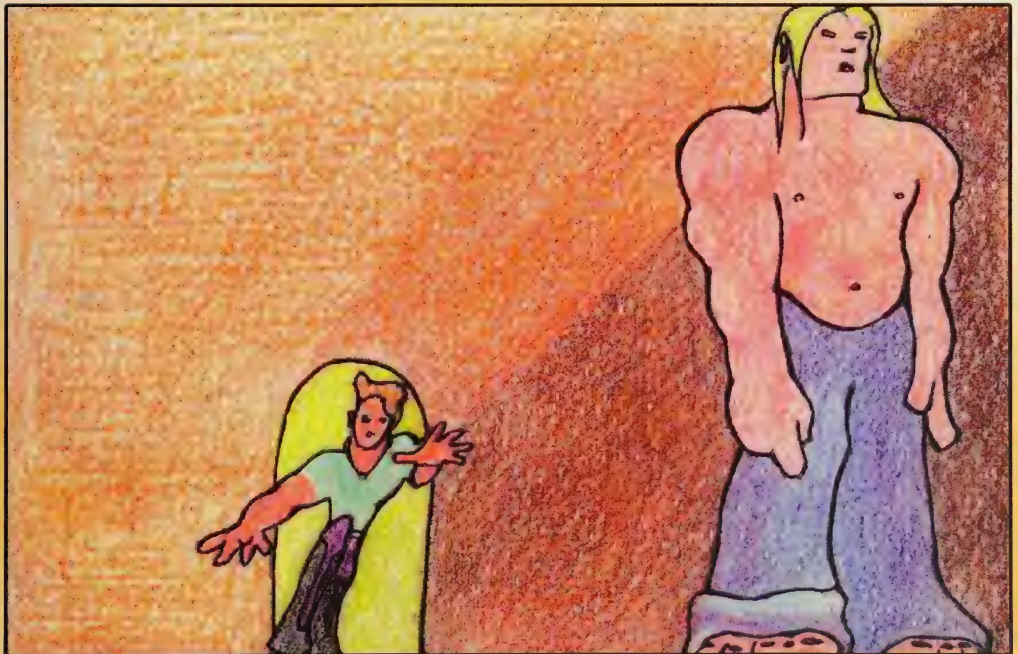
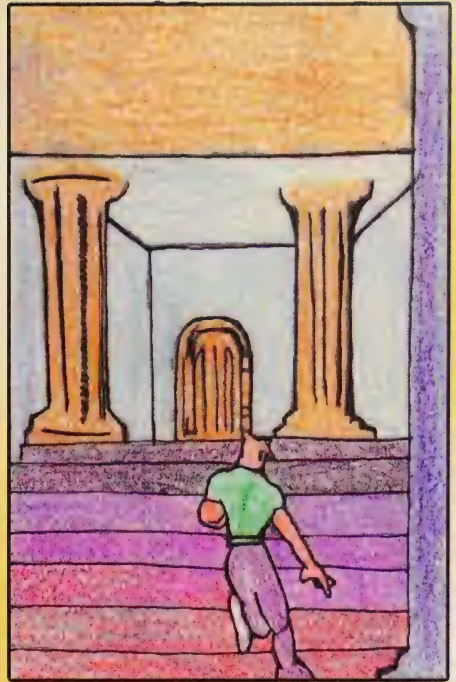
His dead tired legs, hopeful of rest,
To the entrance to the king's slumber nest.
It was dangerous work, kings can kill at will
A peasant, like him, who's voice can shrill ill.

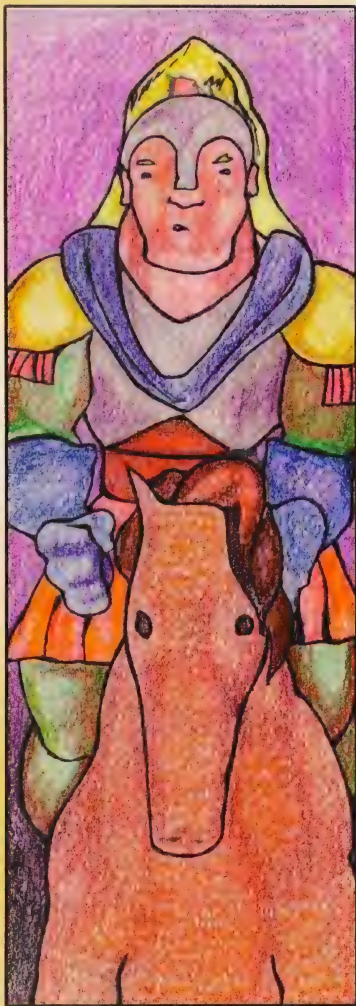
A ruler is cruel, some ears do not like
A young boy's voice and the height it can hike.
The king wasn't dressed, he squimishly stirred,
But pent with fear shouted his frightful word:

'Emerged from the sea, an army of might!
All will have fallen by the third night!
A dirge will be sung: The Tragedy of the Coast.'
The king swelled proud at the prospect to boast.

'Toast to victory, this will not take long,
This army of the sea will fall for this wrong.
A warrior host of this country is who
Will vanquish this swarming foolish sea crew.'

The hushed runner stewed, churning to and fro,
This brash statement was heading to a blow.
He had viewed this army, their size was large,
Waiting for the time on Greek shores to barge.





We had marginal hopes in Greece's force,
'My destiny waits,' the king said full horse.
They were armed and bright. Could this power sting
The sea army? Could Greece's mortal king

Bring this wild army under his fist?
A path had to be found through the forest.
The Greek Time Priest was needed, all was done
Without her wisdom and power as one.

We could shun evil as a whole nation.
Wearily the youth ignored his station.
He wasn't done, fighting a sinking heart,
Dearly he looked on the next run he'd start.





The battle for me had merely begun
So far from my strength, which comes from the sun.
Without warning they punched me in the gut
Through red eyes I saw the dungeon door shut.

Behind the dungeon door was where I'd sit
Until the king saw for me a pain fit.
Death was everywhere, rodents on the floor,
To speak on it makes the horror much more!

I had faded to the ocean's depth below
Unsure I'd survive where evil would grow.
I'm flesh and bone, I can die like the rest.
This fight of will would be my greatest test.

At best I could ask for my survival
In that horrible place, the deep hive full.
I was restless, shackled by that to come
When I heard the beating of a war drum.

Far past sanity, things worst than I feared,
I lagged behind my escorts, the crowd jeered.
Laughter everywhere, lights in my eyes,
I was dragged to a clearing-- swelling war cries!



The king hummed soft. He smiled to the crowd.
He raised his hand. The arena grew loud.
It stunned me, the strange beauty of his staff.
He stepped into a pit with a loud laugh.

Feelings trump logic in a wild fit,
From a clearing I was thrown in the pit.
I was scared but something came over me,
A searing rage, a wild crazy glee!

That being so, my legs felt like dead wood,
As it hit me in the depth of his strength I stood.
The deep frozen sea, the Pit of the Dead,
Was where, to the king's presence, I was led.

He shed his robe to show his woeful frame.
He laughed then said: 'So you think you can tame
Me? Dumb Wizard! I'll fulfill your death mark!
Beneath the sea's hood thrives my kingdom's dark.

Start praying fool! make peace with who you choose,
I'll end you, tonight, your life you will lose.'
My heart filled with rage, a malice to kill
The dark emperor and the work of his will.

My rage swelled with intentions of stopping
His cruel scorn to his kingdom's toppling.
I stood still to deceive my escort's grasp.
Then silenced the crowd to all but a gasp.

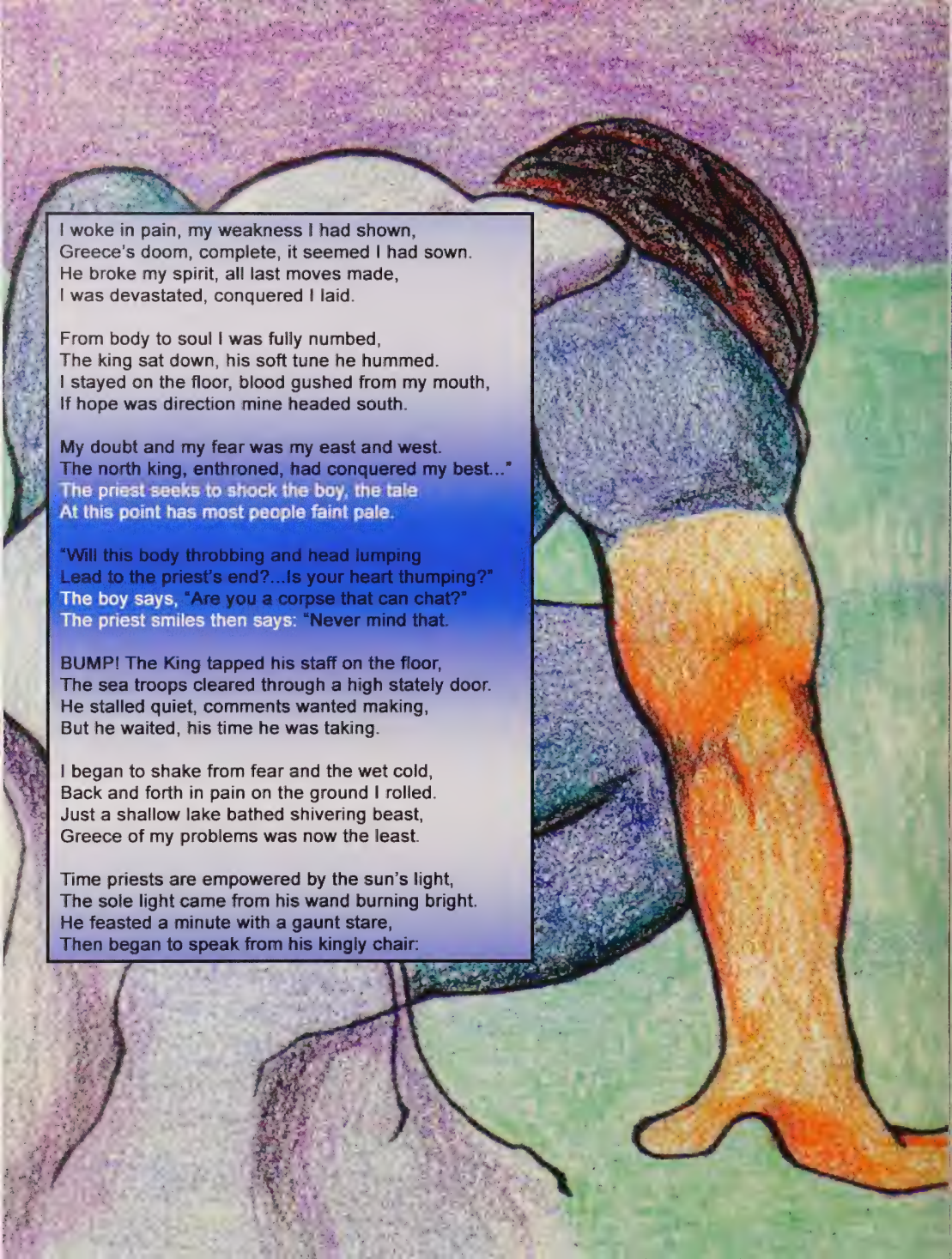


I came against the king with all of my might,
Dashing off my escorts, rage burning bright.
A flame of fury was hot in my eyes
Lashing out wild coming from the skies.

I soared high, leapt from the deep ocean's deck,
To come down on my foe and wring his neck.
I expected my plan to work as I had planned it,
I was wrong! a dupe! A foiled bandit!

He landed blows, I landed on the floor,
The king was strong, and my head was sore.
I began passing out, my head aching,
I thought, a moment, of my death faking.





I woke in pain, my weakness I had shown,
Greece's doom, complete, it seemed I had sown.
He broke my spirit, all last moves made,
I was devastated, conquered I laid.

From body to soul I was fully numbed,
The king sat down, his soft tune he hummed.
I stayed on the floor, blood gushed from my mouth,
If hope was direction mine headed south.

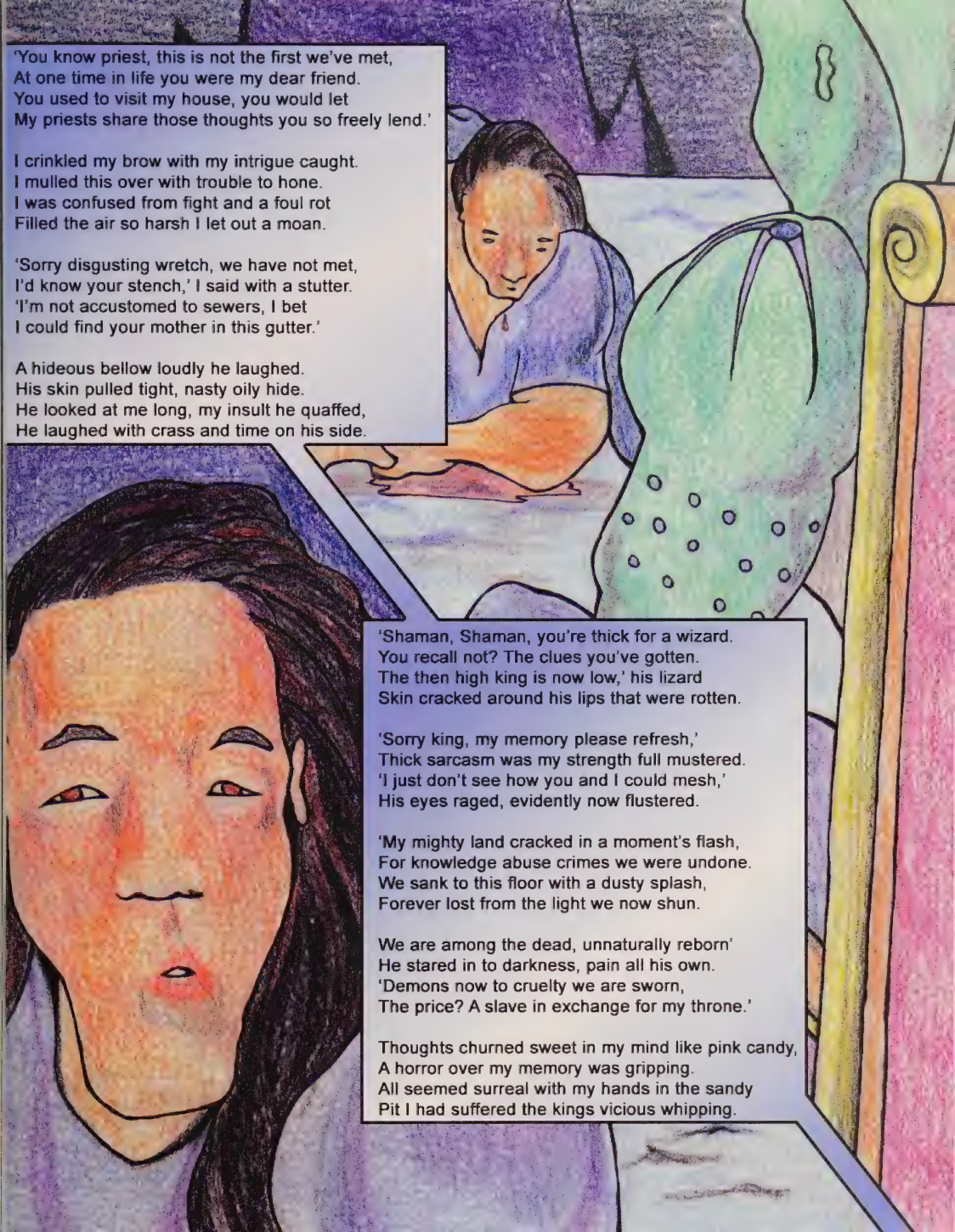
My doubt and my fear was my east and west.
The north king, enthroned, had conquered my best..."
The priest seeks to shock the boy, the tale
At this point has most people faint pale.

"Will this body throbbing and head lumping
Lead to the priest's end?...Is your heart thumping?"
The boy says, "Are you a corpse that can chat?"
The priest smiles then says: "Never mind that.

BUMP! The King tapped his staff on the floor,
The sea troops cleared through a high stately door.
He stalled quiet, comments wanted making,
But he waited, his time he was taking.

I began to shake from fear and the wet cold,
Back and forth in pain on the ground I rolled.
Just a shallow lake bathed shivering beast,
Greece of my problems was now the least.

Time priests are empowered by the sun's light,
The sole light came from his wand burning bright.
He feasted a minute with a gaunt stare,
Then began to speak from his kingly chair:



'You know priest, this is not the first we've met,
At one time in life you were my dear friend.
You used to visit my house, you would let
My priests share those thoughts you so freely lend.'

I crinkled my brow with my intrigue caught.
I mulled this over with trouble to hone.
I was confused from fight and a foul rot
Filled the air so harsh I let out a moan.

'Sorry disgusting wretch, we have not met,
I'd know your stench,' I said with a stutter.
'I'm not accustomed to sewers, I bet
I could find your mother in this gutter.'

A hideous bellow loudly he laughed.
His skin pulled tight, nasty oily hide.
He looked at me long, my insult he quaffed,
He laughed with crass and time on his side.

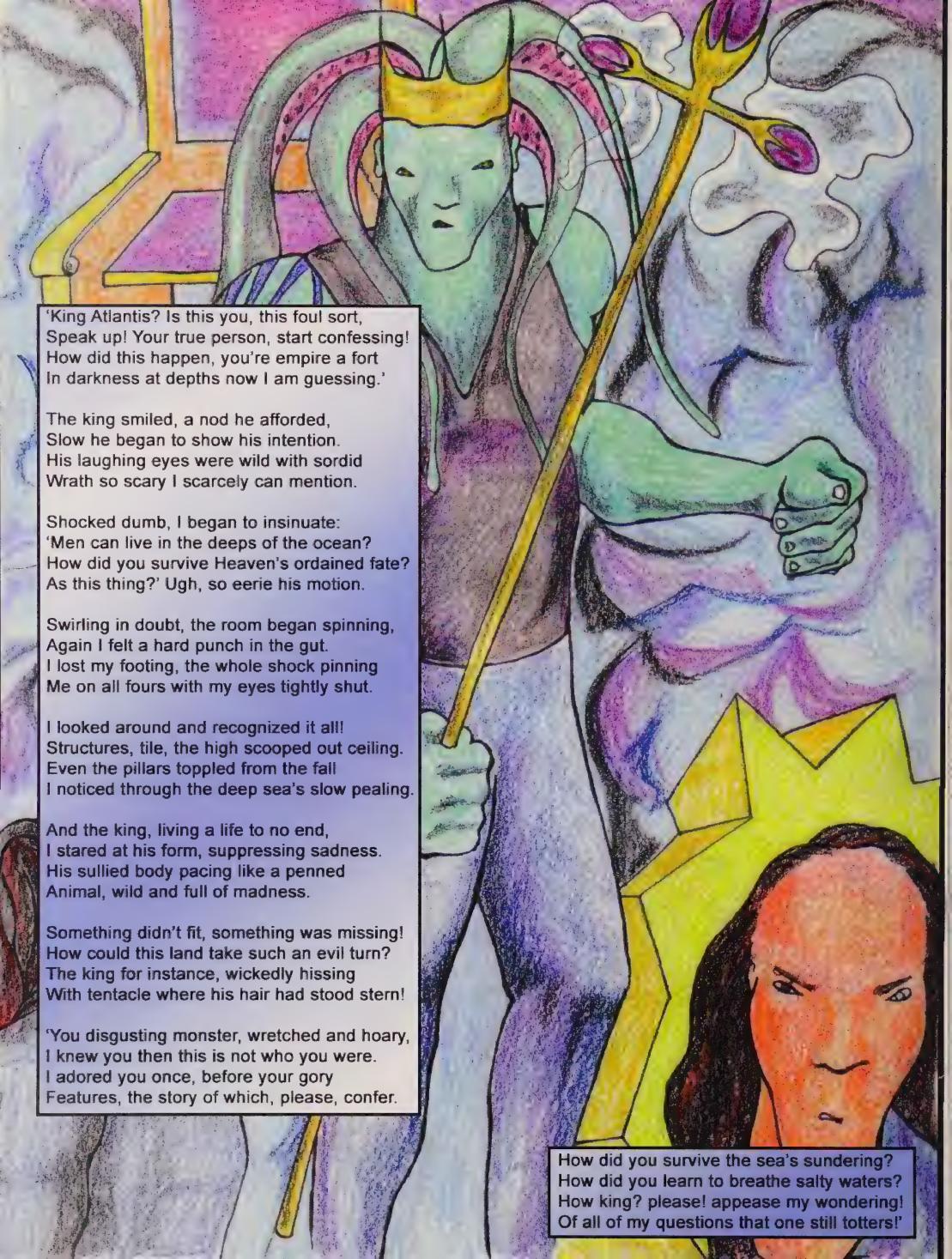
'Shaman, Shaman, you're thick for a wizard.
You recall not? The clues you've gotten.
The then high king is now low,' his lizard
Skin cracked around his lips that were rotten.

'Sorry king, my memory please refresh,'
Thick sarcasm was my strength full mustered.
'I just don't see how you and I could mesh,'
His eyes raged, evidently now flustered.

'My mighty land cracked in a moment's flash,
For knowledge abuse crimes we were undone.
We sank to this floor with a dusty splash,
Forever lost from the light we now shun.

We are among the dead, unnaturally reborn'
He stared in to darkness, pain all his own.
'Demons now to cruelty we are sworn,
The price? A slave in exchange for my throne.'

Thoughts churned sweet in my mind like pink candy,
A horror over my memory was gripping.
All seemed surreal with my hands in the sandy
Pit I had suffered the kings vicious whipping.



'King Atlantis? Is this you, this foul sort,
Speak up! Your true person, start confessing!
How did this happen, you're empire a fort
In darkness at depths now I am guessing.'

The king smiled, a nod he afforded,
Slow he began to show his intention.
His laughing eyes were wild with sordid
Wrath so scary I scarcely can mention.

Shocked dumb, I began to insinuate:
'Men can live in the deeps of the ocean?
How did you survive Heaven's ordained fate?
As this thing?' Ugh, so eerie his motion.

Swirling in doubt, the room began spinning,
Again I felt a hard punch in the gut.
I lost my footing, the whole shock pinning
Me on all fours with my eyes tightly shut.

I looked around and recognized it all!
Structures, tile, the high scooped out ceiling.
Even the pillars toppled from the fall
I noticed through the deep sea's slow peeling.

And the king, living a life to no end,
I stared at his form, suppressing sadness.
His sullied body pacing like a penned
Animal, wild and full of madness.

Something didn't fit, something was missing!
How could this land take such an evil turn?
The king for instance, wickedly hissing
With tentacle where his hair had stood stern!

'You disgusting monster, wretched and hoary,
I knew you then this is not who you were.
I adored you once, before your gory
Features, the story of which, please, confer.

How did you survive the sea's sundering?
How did you learn to breathe salty waters?
How king? please! appease my wondering!
Of all of my questions that one still totters!'

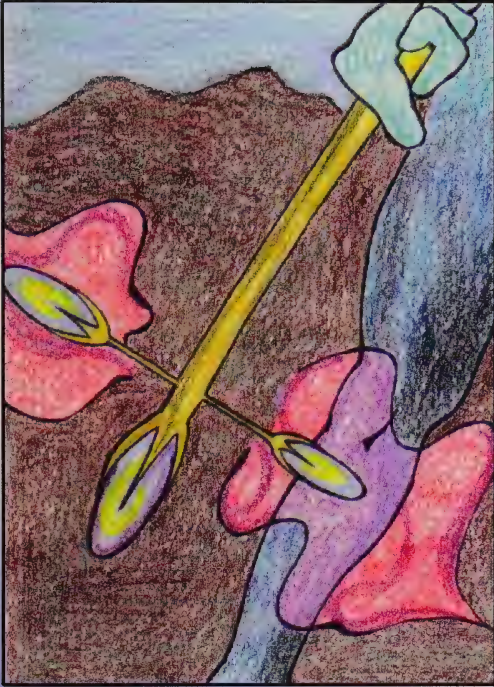
'Then, with dark light, I brought my kin to life.
I made them foot soldiers, to life I willed!
I did not exclude even my sweet wife.'
I would have shrieked if my heart wasn't stilled.

In a dark corner a dead body was propped.
It reeked of vomit and hunched but stirred less.
A blade was sunk in the floor. It had lopped
Her legs off for spite. I was shocked wordless.

Life piled on life, the natural cycle ended.
The horror! I saw death's end as a gift.
That haggard corpses in torture offended
My mind, which filled with images in shift.



King Atlantis paced, back, forth, a mad dog
That had returned to the sea, living wet.
I sat still, I was consumed by the fog.
His words spoke of preternatural debt.



Then I noticed, as he passed his wife's face,
With her being dead she convulsed and moved!
He didn't notice, so consumed in pace.
A light in my mind went on as if cued.

I could then see his link to the living!
The den was a tomb illumed by his staff.
Slowly but surely his crass was giving
Me time to figure the work of his craft.

'The undead must at least mimic life
In their darkness a little light must seep.'
This thought cut through me like a knife
Cropping the hell of the King of the Deep.

'The Slave Light Wand keeps alive those who're dead.
The undead live as long as it can burn.
A zombie fights without a thought in its head
The feeble Greek force will very soon learn.'

He saw my frightened eyes dart to and fro.
'Oh, I've seen them from below and afar.
I hear your mind much more than you can know.
My army can't die if bound to this bar.'

That was why his army could not be stopped.
I was cutting wounds that don't need to heal!
Plus the spells I roared were easily popped.
It also seemed like my thoughts he could steal.

The world closed in and faded to dark
I was powerless in ways not known to free men.
I stood dumb like a songless skylark,
Without purpose in the undead's morbid den.

Sooner or later a time comes that shows
Even the great works as finite things.
A place determined by youth's haste, which slows
The growing wealth a struggling soul brings.

The fiery youth can move a mountain
Only by Time to have the work destroyed.
What does the brash youth do? Having begun
A doomed path? Have Heart! Youth still is employed.

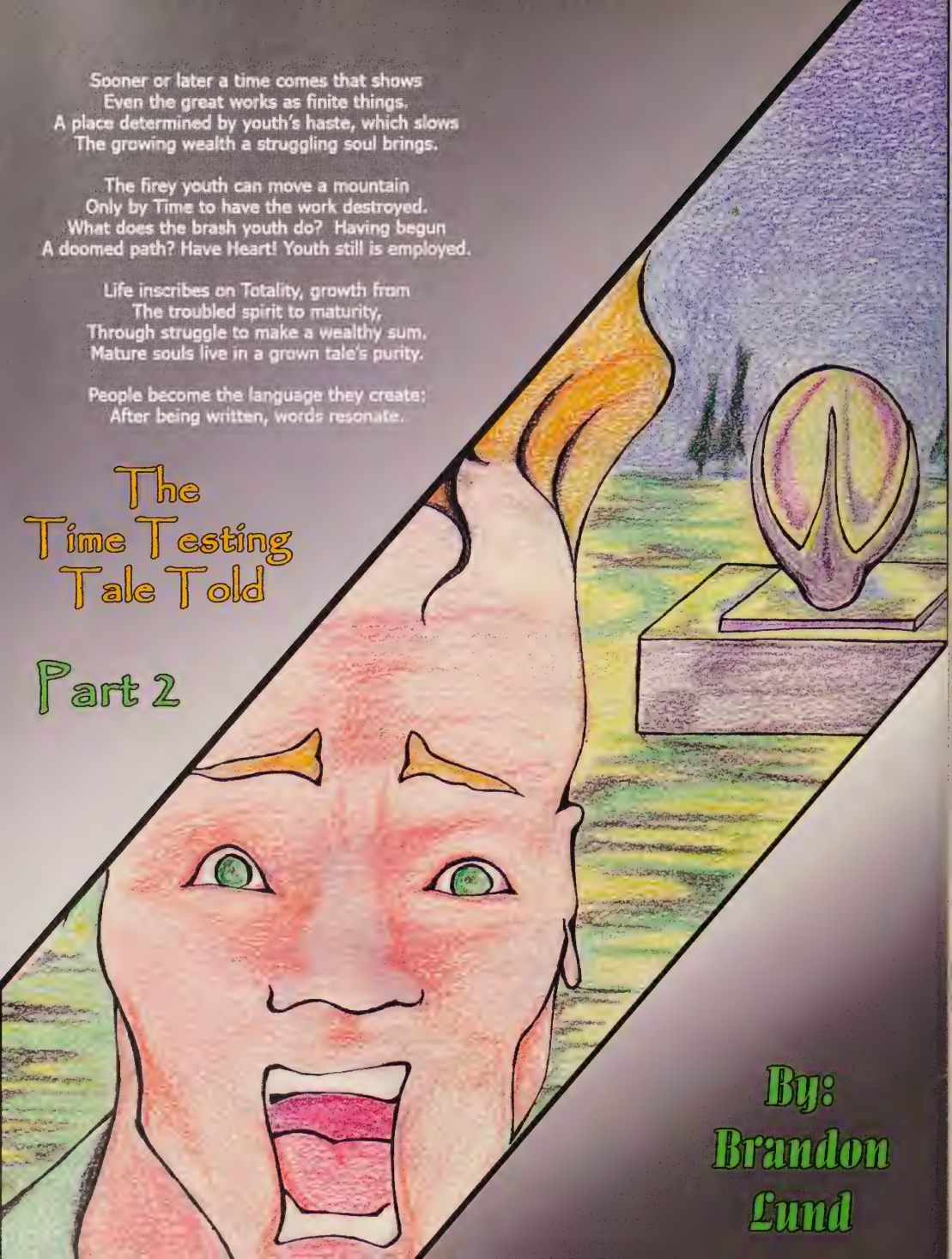
Life inscribes on Totality, growth from
The troubled spirit to maturity,
Through struggle to make a wealthy sum.
Mature souls live in a grown tale's purity.

People become the language they create;
After being written, words resonate.

The Time Testing Tale Told

Part 2

By:
Brandon
Lund



As I lay in the Deep, a withered hulk,
 The Greek King was traveling to the shore.
 The ease of his journey would be no more.
 When he saw the sea he began to sulk,
 Terrified of the sea army's sheer bulk.
 I was told it was absolute horror.

But the teller was rude! I got railed
 With harsh accusations from this soldier
 (Whose war account was the truth, but bolder).
 He was mad because he thought I failed
 The army, all the while he wailed
 For a friend whose death he had to shoulder.

He thought I sent them without any chance
 For a Greek military victory;
 So pay attention because the story
 He made up about me, his song and dance,
 Does nothing but amplify and enhance
 His deplorable opinion of me!

Regardless, every man in that Greek set
 Can hold their heads high with a noble heart:
 They were true to each other, they didn't part
 From their comrade's side, like soldiers they met
 A formidable foe eye to eye, yet
 Things went bad from what he had to impart.



He said: 'When we first arrived on the shore
 Of Greece, it was overwhelmed in the fight
 Against those responsible for our plight.
 It was clear, troops would continue to pour
 From the sea unless we fastened the door
 To the deep and its never-ending night.

We were ignorant to our coming dread,
 We had no knowledge to define these troops.
 But we quickly learned; when a body loops
 Around in loose circles without a head
 There is more in store than what has been said!
 It was awful, the reason my face droops.

Priest! They weren't living! They were living dead!
 How were we supposed to challenge that force?'
 Pointing at me with a voice going hoarse
 He said: 'It was by you we were misled!
 I'm not angry but I could cleave your head!
 And believe me when I say things got worse!

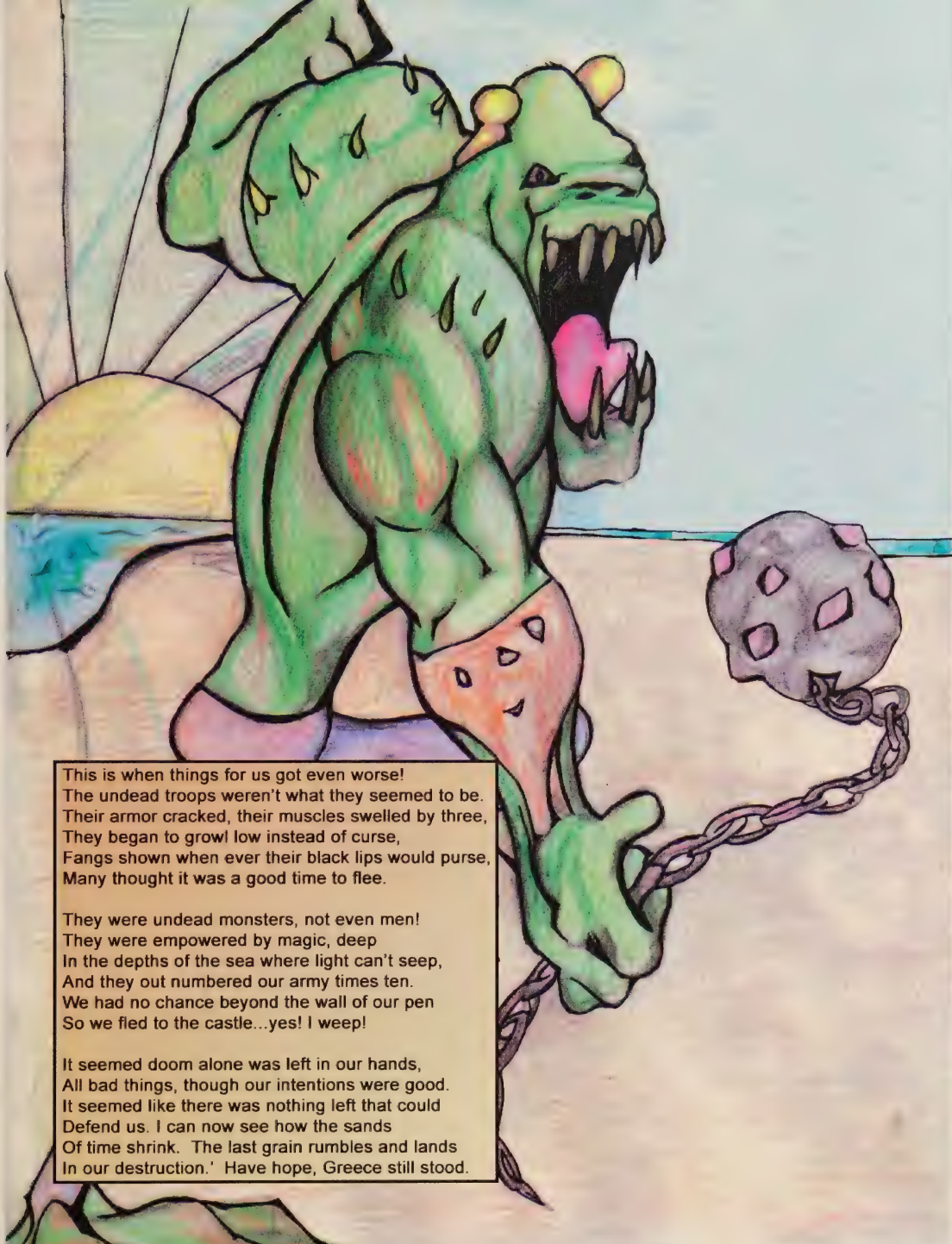
'The fight started out with profanity,
 They cast lewd gestures, I guess in fun,'
 As he spoke long sad tears began to run.
 'That's the receipt of insanity:
 One part fear and one part magnanimity
 And, I tell you, the battle had only begun!

Our king, seeing this, raised his fist to air
 His power and for all his ranks to breathe.
 He yelled 'victory' his voice was the key
 To unleash our strength. With a dauntless stare
 The undead soldiers stood unfazed by his blare,
 The battle begun: Man against zombie.



To all! I think it should be understood
 That it is difficult to fight on the sand!
 The tension began heating as we stood
 Poised for combat. Our Greek king thought we should
 Stay clear of the sea, so they came on land
 To battle us on the beach, hand to hand!

From the rolling sea their soldiers attacked!
 A wave crashed against us without remorse.
 We were brave men and stood our course
 But they were too strong, their power backed
 Us. Against the zombies, one thing we lacked:
 The strength of the living dead's careless force!



This is when things for us got even worse!
The undead troops weren't what they seemed to be.
Their armor cracked, their muscles swelled by three,
They began to growl low instead of curse,
Fangs shown when ever their black lips would purse,
Many thought it was a good time to flee.

They were undead monsters, not even men!
They were empowered by magic, deep
In the depths of the sea where light can't seep,
And they out numbered our army times ten.
We had no chance beyond the wall of our pen
So we fled to the castle...yes! I weep!

It seemed doom alone was left in our hands,
All bad things, though our intentions were good.
It seemed like there was nothing left that could
Defend us. I can now see how the sands
Of time shrink. The last grain rumbles and lands
In our destruction.' Have hope, Greece still stood.



Greece's hope was its runner, their last light.
 The path he tread led him to a statue
 Where the Greek Shaman, breath she lightly drew,
 Lay beneath a strange Idol glowing bright.
 A growing sense of the foul Idol's might
 Began creeping. What should the runner do?

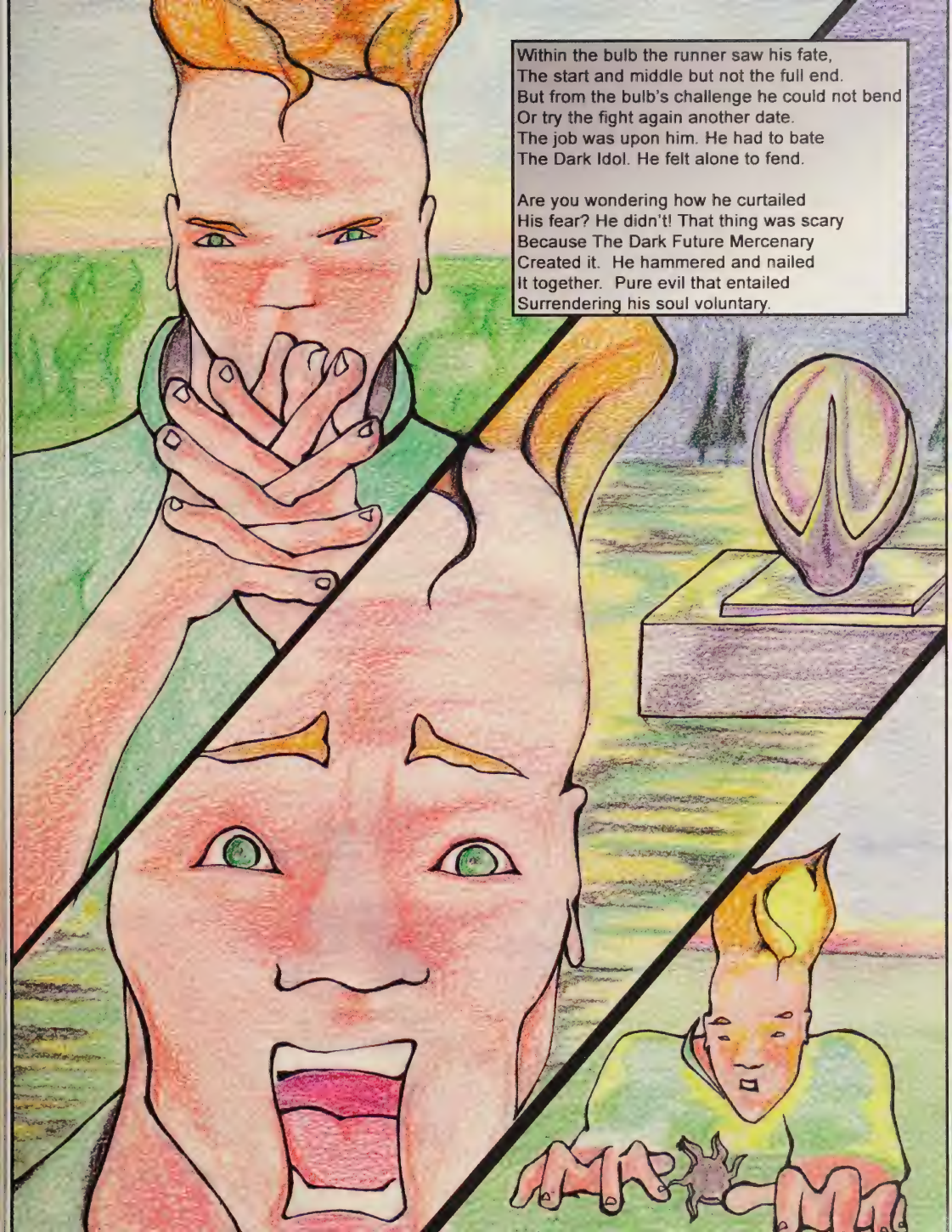
If runners are hope hope is not inert,
 It moves faster than the pace of its kin.
 Like a spoke supporting the wheel's spin,
 Friendship must be in place before the dirt.
 The young runner became hyper alert
 He felt alone in a contest to win.

He felt ill equipped against his great foe.
 But there was more than he thought behind him.
 He wasn't alone on a sky-line grown dim,
 He was a strong vessel from Greece. I'd show
 That despite his fear, the sole thing some know,
 He was more prepared than a hasty whim.

Fear alone was the dark Idol's power,
 It frightened him, that's what evil will do,
 And weight on his shoulders from somewhere grew.
 He felt overcome by the Dark Tower.
 He couldn't see the trees or smell a flower,
 Though existing, its power blocked his view.

The ground grumbled and shook, day turned to night,
 And blacker than natural was the deep sky.
 Fearful imps seemed to cheer, shadowed near by,
 And though the Idol was shiny and bright
 It took on hues annoying to the sight.
 Then it showed to him what seemed like a lie.





Within the bulb the runner saw his fate,
The start and middle but not the full end.
But from the bulb's challenge he could not bend
Or try the fight again another date.
The job was upon him. He had to bate
The Dark Idol. He felt alone to fend.

Are you wondering how he curtailed
His fear? He didn't! That thing was scary
Because The Dark Future Mercenary
Created it. He hammered and nailed
It together. Pure evil that entailed
Surrendering his soul voluntary.



So where was I? Oh! The runner's fear.
Was the idol alive? Like a virus
That poisons even the magnanimous
And spins the mind's wheel, a handy gear.
The runner paced looking for a good near
As the bulb bled an odor odious.

He stated a challenge to the dread block
That he could endure the thing's evil test
And just his youth could conquer its best
And decipher the key to its power's lock.
Then The Dark Idol began to mock
Him, responding without a moment's rest:

'Ha! Humanity is a Beasts of Need,
Some think to love your neighbor is the rule.
It is an idea, used as a tool,
To weaken and deceive people to feed
Without questioning who takes the lead
And this is how I dupe the mighty fool:

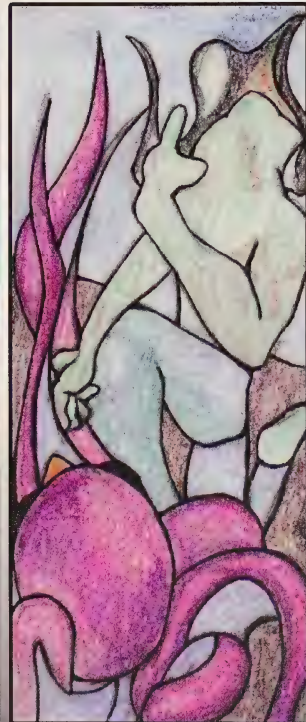
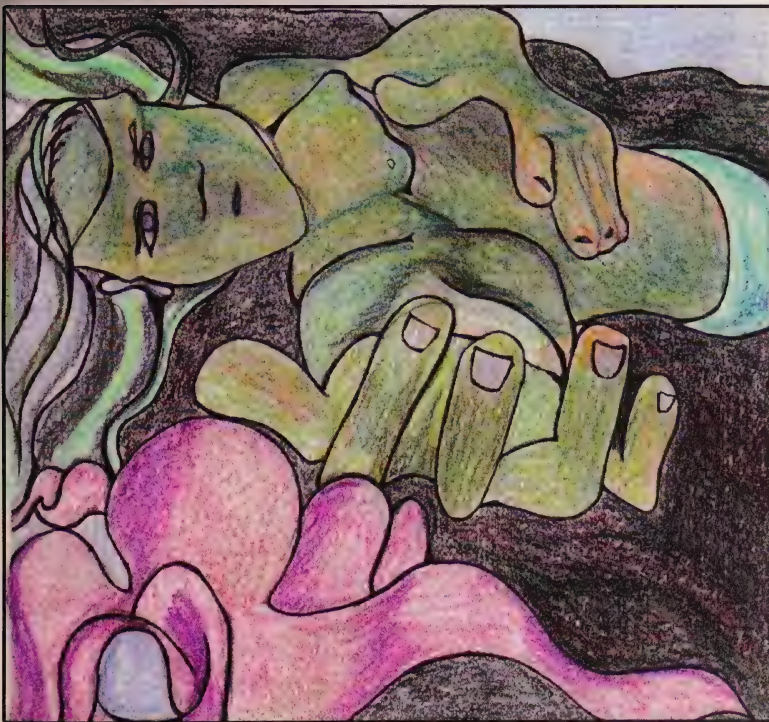
Lost souls look for things that last forever!
Like stories that say we're not dying beings!
Tie this to the false hope that violence brings
Life, and people buy that they can never
Die! Those who won't see Death will be, whether
Good or bad, forever my underlings!

Misperception makes a fool a killer.
Can those who influence death escape it?
Scared creatures are easily baited.
You can resist me, correct? Ha! I'm sure,
Wait, something timid in your heart will stir
To the deep pitch like my sunk king weighted.

I'm the one that brought Atlantis to life,
 I am the one that animates its will.
 Their king is my puppet, seized in the still.
 He bought my fallacy, betrayed his wife,
 And now his authority is his strife:
 He cannot conquer death, my slave until.

I'm a shapeshifter, everywhere I creep.
 King Atlantis has been my greatest prize!
 The power of Atlantis' sheer size
 Will fill my wealth to an overflown heep.
 Greece will become the race of upright sheep!
 Courage, only a mortal moment, buys!'

The runner in truth was devastated.
 If the king couldn't resist how could he?
 But then something on him stirred quietly.
 He reached for my gift, his heart was sated.
 Persuasive and still the Idol waited.
 My created gift glowed warm and softly.





The gift wasn't much, if you're wondering,
But it did bring hope as well as relief,
Which countered the Idol's twisted belief.
The ancient songs of wisdom always sing:
'Only youth and wisdom together bring
Peace'. The runner spoke his words, quick and brief:


'You say a person is a Beast of Need,
Then I have questions of intent to ask.
Mad words just as often reveal as mask
The truth. Introspection alone has cleaved
My path. Storytellers oppress the seed
Who doesn't look in to perceive his task.

Why does my young spirit norish from this
Dark Idol? If what you say is all true.
My quiet dreams of what's real won't skew
From your half-told tale, a two tongued hiss
Horror bedtime story, cloaked with a kiss.'
Hope in the runner's heart slowly grew.

'If needs are all that drive us,' he confessed,
'Dreams of Truth and Beauty are among them.
Either which way I see your powers dim.
A dream of Truth and Beauty is twice blessed:
Blessing the impressor and the impressed.
It is a river that will branch and stem.

We are not Beasts of Need, though living things;
Hungry and hopeful and willing to try
Living with unanswered questions. Yet, why
Against all odds should I try? Life's struggle brings
Unity's wisdom-power. A note sings
Clearer when at some point it will die.

You speak in two tongues, foul ruthless tower,
Half-truths muddle how growth comes in levels.
Your intentions, unchecked, are terrible,
Spreading cruelty to your last hour.
We are Beasts of Need in pursuit of power
Through stories that make people devils!

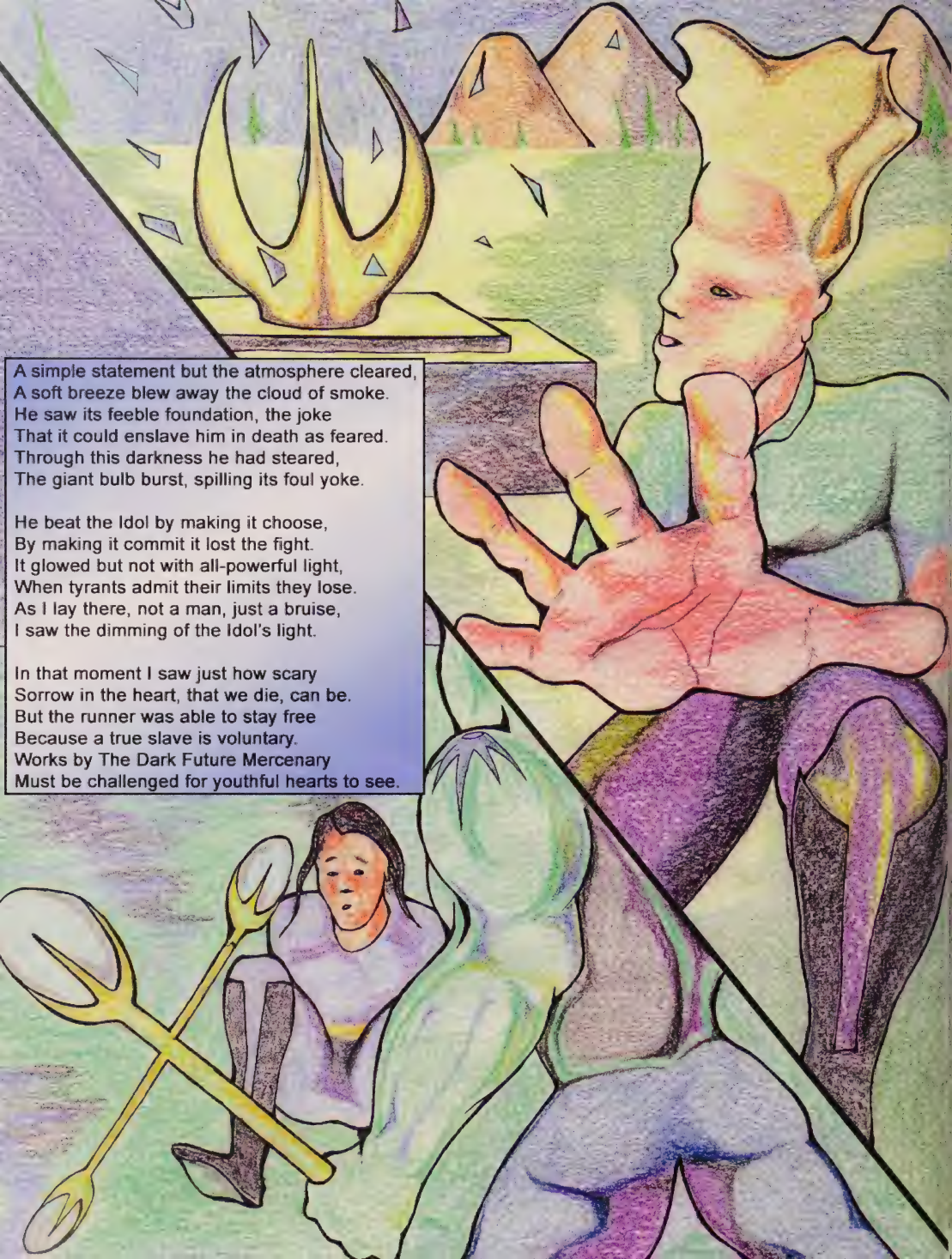


The Idol's power gripped the runner's soul,
Even a strong constitution buckles
Under stress. He grabbed air till his knuckles
Turned white. It said, "You impudent small troll,
Dauntless in your argument annul,
When rebellion roars, authority chuckles!

'Man is a Beast of Need,' The bulb glowed hot,
'Look here, see, you're dying. All of your schemes,
Along with all of your desperate dreams,
Are left cold on the earth to stink and rot!
Serve me now and fulfill my evil plot,
If you will not, death is all that's left it seems.'

The runner said: 'Life by you is driven,
But killing me doesn't mean Death is you!
Everything eventually dies, you too!
Life only survives when it is given,
Hypocrite! employing aimless subversion:
The beast of need believes your attitude!'

The kid writhed in torture but held on tight.
He said, 'Your reign is over, not begun.
I think you are powerful, a false sun,
Endowed with false and unnatural light
But your strength is not right with Time's true might.
I'd rather die from cruel things than be one!'



A simple statement but the atmosphere cleared,
A soft breeze blew away the cloud of smoke.
He saw its feeble foundation, the joke
That it could enslave him in death as feared.
Through this darkness he had steered,
The giant bulb burst, spilling its foul yoke.

He beat the Idol by making it choose,
By making it commit it lost the fight.
It glowed but not with all-powerful light,
When tyrants admit their limits they lose.
As I lay there, not a man, just a bruise,
I saw the dimming of the Idol's light.

In that moment I saw just how scary
Sorrow in the heart, that we die, can be.
But the runner was able to stay free
Because a true slave is voluntary.
Works by The Dark Future Mercenary
Must be challenged for youthful hearts to see.





At once, the Wand of Slave Light flickered out.
Then within my heart swelled a mighty wealth
Of courage. I fought him, without a doubt,
Crushing him with the full breadth of my clout.
Combat has done strange things to the mind's health,
Not what I've seen, what I've seen in myself.

The king of Atlantis, I broke his staff
And was ready to lay my foe to waste,
Of murderous rage I now had a taste,
I was ready to write his epitaph.
I may chuckle boy but it's a scared laugh,
But the king spoke words with concern and haste:

'Don't do this deed Shaman, you're still free,
This cruel path you have not truly started.
But if you follow through and you kill me
You and your inner self will be parted.
Listen to me Shaman, I have much to tell,
Now that I hear the tolling of the bell.

I have fallen in morals, now power,
I will die quickly, if you can, trust me.
If you kill me, your every last hour
Will become dark in a world eerie.
I have brought the world so much trouble,
If you fall too, then my debt is double.

Now, in death, I can envision life's light,
I can see what I have been searching for.
I can see past my blind hunger for might.
With this new sight, I say I want no more.
Dear Shaman! The beauty of vision clear...
Have I done all this? To see is my fear.

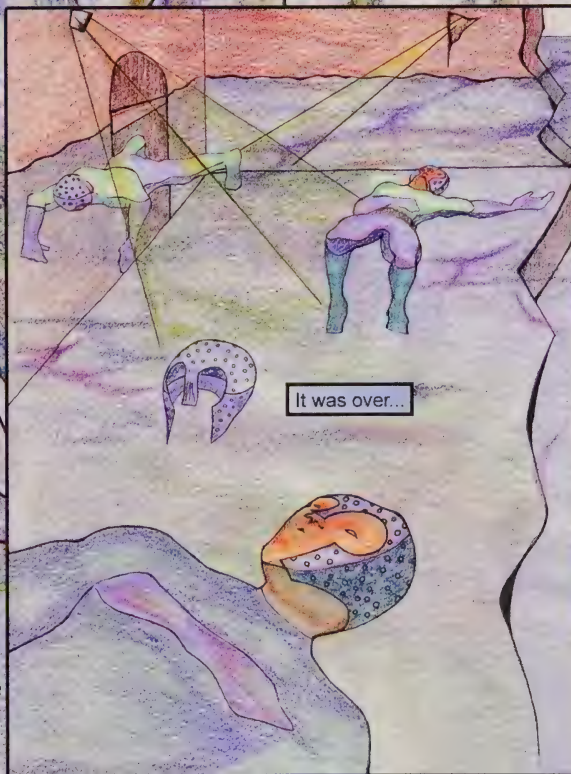
I see!-- life is lived in Totality,
And Time has deemed this nonnegotiable.
I know now, when life is no longer free,
It's just a puppet to a ruler's pull.
Instead of war I could have been dreaming,
Power over life does not breed meaning.

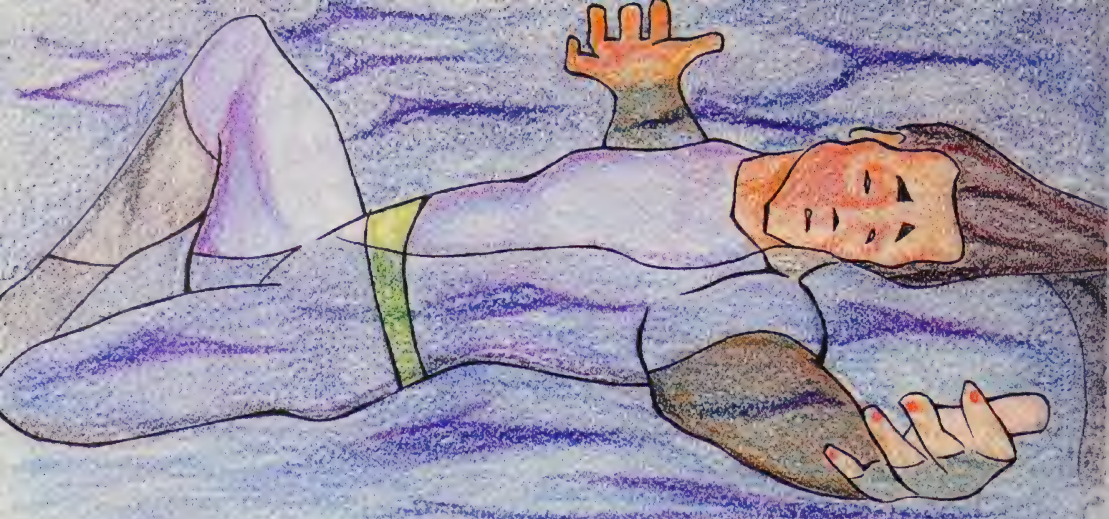
Priest, thank you, I can see my time is here.
It is clear, I should have died with my age.
For I did nothing but preserve my fear
Of death, which ultimately became my cage.
Then he began melting like a wax candle
That burned till it was mush on the handle....



With a huge CRACK! Atlantis left its nest,
Crumbled, then departed for surface air.
The land of Greece had endured the last test.
It wrenched Atlantis free with a deep tear.
Dead bodies! Dead bodies were everywhere!
No longer the dark light they had to bear!

To die up above Atlantis was bound,
To breath a fresh breath for the final time.
Though tremendous in act it made no sound:
A dying sinner remorseful of its crime.
Atlantis boiled, roared, then broke the surface,
Do not worry and do not be nervous:





Though not for me, I was still questing,
If bodies are vessels, my sails ripped,
A horror flooded ship, without resting,
A terror stricken soul, more than once tipped.
I've learned that friendship is a blessed act.
A true friend is an angel, that's a fact.

I was saved from the sea and the rubble
By someone, then only seeing their shoes.
When Atlantis burst its evil bubble
It left all unsure whose soul was whose.
If I could I would have saved my own soul
But I couldn't stir, I could only roll.

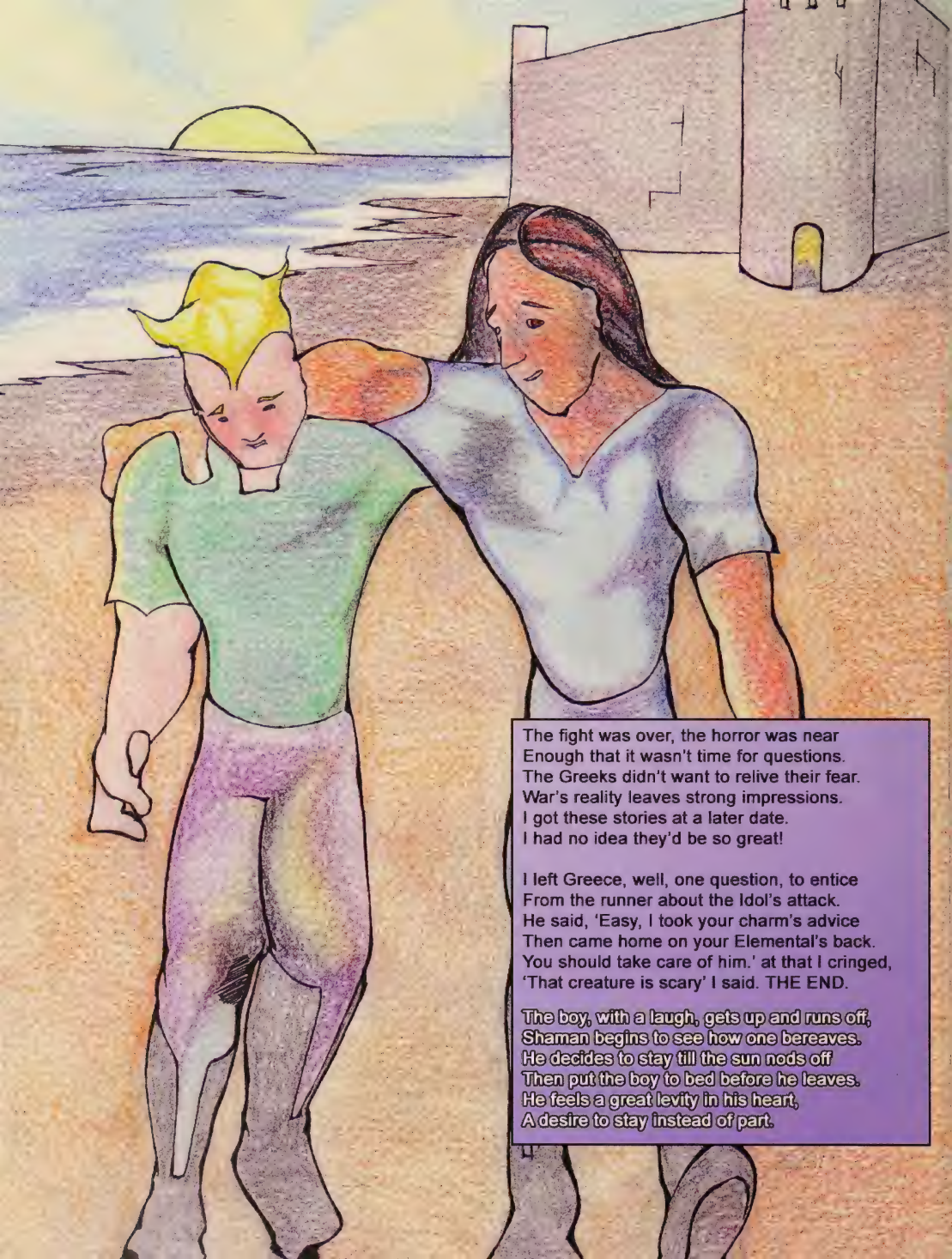
Whoever saved me left me on the beach.
As a grew calm beneath the sun I felt
A presence by my side. I searched for speech
As the sorrow in my heart warmed to melt.
The source of this warmth was a longed for touch,
In truth, the reason I endured so much.

O! The sorrow of love chased all for not!
When persistent night has blotted out the sun!
When love has cooled from its radiant hot
Beneath this darkness, too long, I've run.
The Greek Priest could see the pain in my eyes
My failure I felt and I knew it inside.

She looked at me, I knew she knew my mind,
'The moment with your loved ones,' she would say,
'Will be greater than deeds done far away:
You wander lost because you still are blind.
I have a task for you to do for me.
It is a plan that will set us both free.

You seek greatness, so tell tales Shaman.
In there you will find what you desire.
It is wealth for an adventurous man.
A dying spark needs air to make fire.'
Then she did something that made me wince,
She left me with Time, I've not seen her since.





The fight was over, the horror was near
Enough that it wasn't time for questions.
The Greeks didn't want to relive their fear.
War's reality leaves strong impressions.
I got these stories at a later date.
I had no idea they'd be so great!

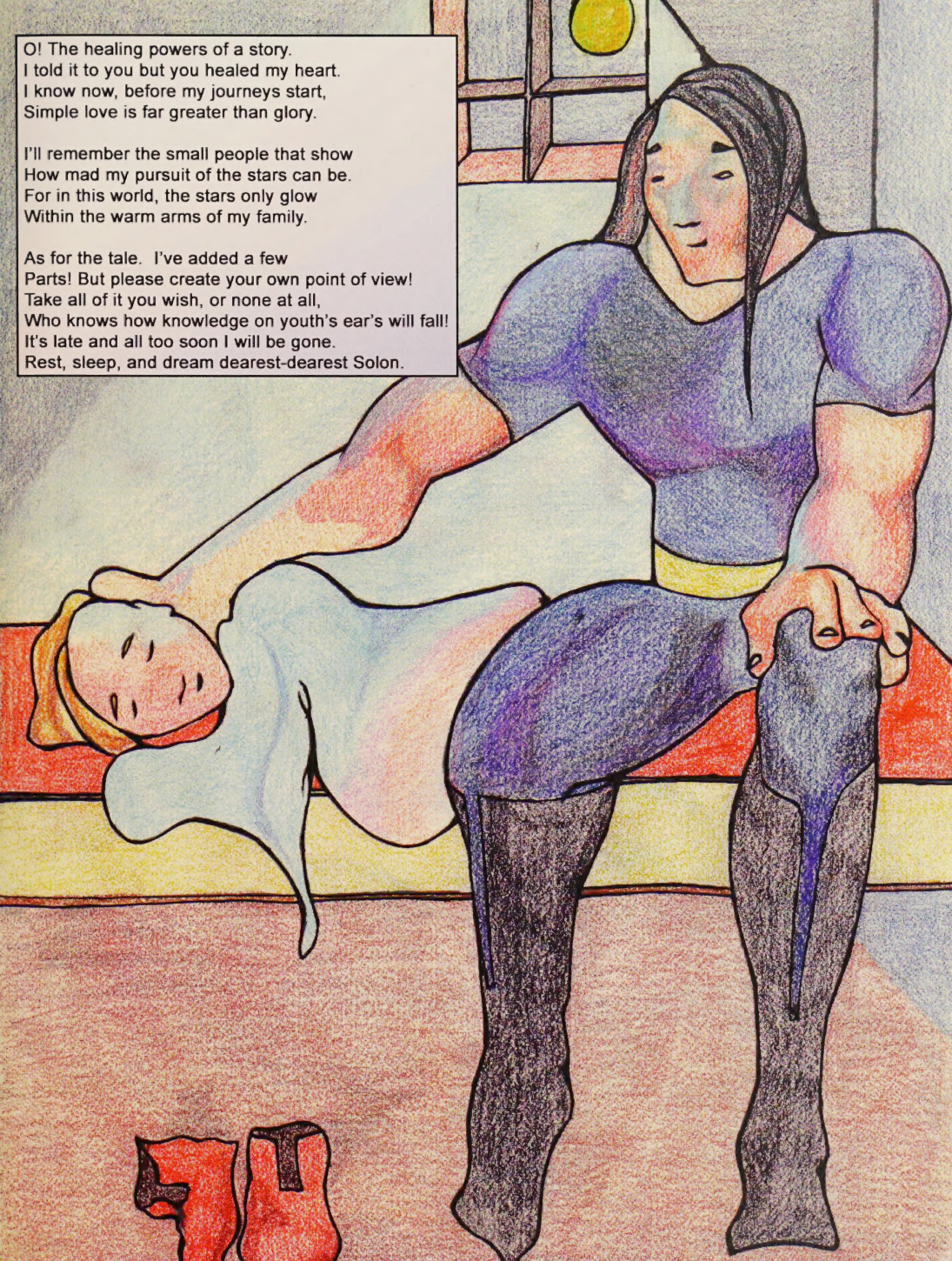
I left Greece, well, one question, to entice
From the runner about the Idol's attack.
He said, 'Easy, I took your charm's advice
Then came home on your Elemental's back.
You should take care of him,' at that I cringed,
'That creature is scary' I said. THE END.

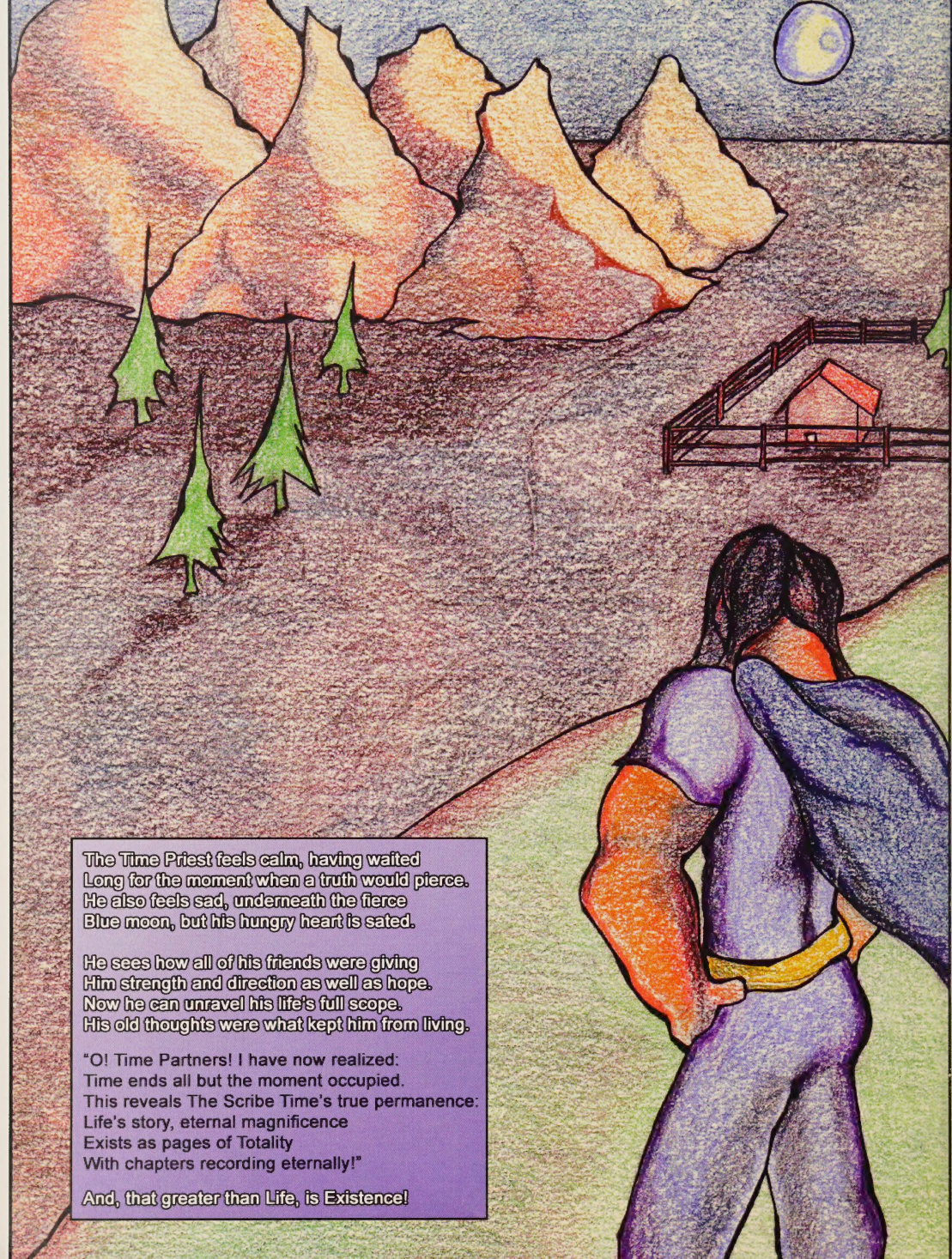
The boy, with a laugh, gets up and runs off,
Shaman begins to see how one bereaves.
He decides to stay till the sun nods off
Then put the boy to bed before he leaves.
He feels a great levity in his heart,
A desire to stay instead of part.

O! The healing powers of a story.
I told it to you but you healed my heart.
I know now, before my journeys start,
Simple love is far greater than glory.

I'll remember the small people that show
How mad my pursuit of the stars can be.
For in this world, the stars only glow
Within the warm arms of my family.

As for the tale. I've added a few
Parts! But please create your own point of view!
Take all of it you wish, or none at all,
Who knows how knowledge on youth's ear's will fall!
It's late and all too soon I will be gone.
Rest, sleep, and dream dearest-dearest Solon.





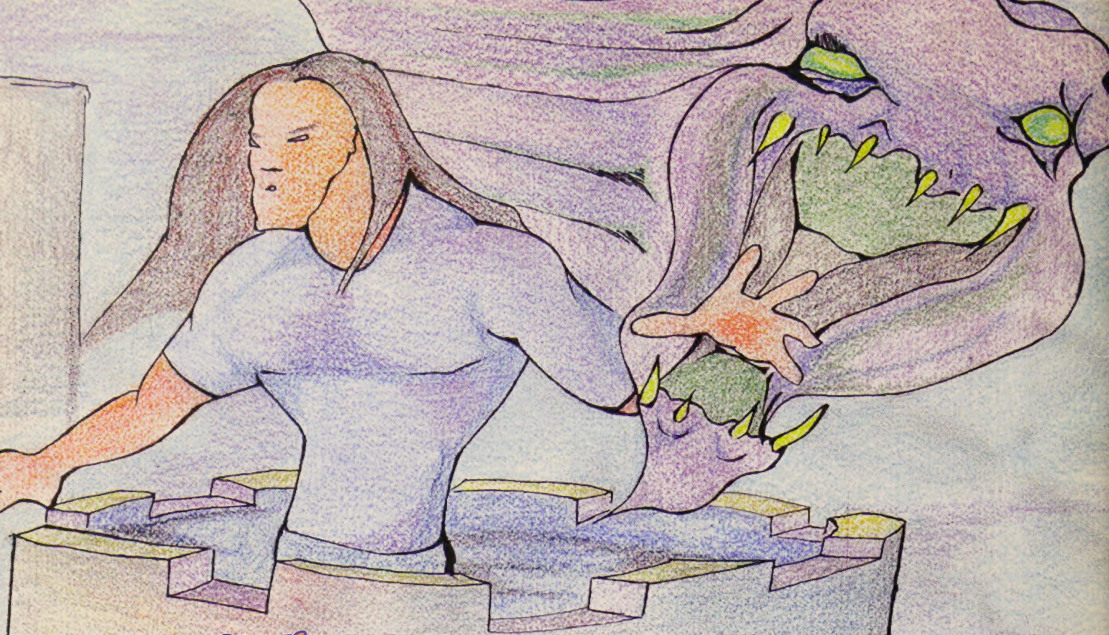
The Time Priest feels calm, having waited
Long for the moment when a truth would pierce.
He also feels sad, underneath the fierce
Blue moon, but his hungry heart is sated.

He sees how all of his friends were giving
Him strength and direction as well as hope.
Now he can unravel his life's full scope.
His old thoughts were what kept him from living.

"O! Time Partners! I have now realized:
Time ends all but the moment occupied.
This reveals The Scribe Time's true permanence:
Life's story, eternal magnificence
Exists as pages of Totality
With chapters recording eternally!"

And, that greater than Life, is Existence!





The Time Testing Tale Told

To my muses of ages young and old,
Endow this elevated strength in kind:
A youthful vigor and a quickened mind
To tell a tale of a tale told.

To tell of events played, staged big and small,
Where a youthful heart pulsed with roles unknown.
How a child's strength stayed a hero's fall
Like stone breaking water momentum grown.

How our hero's hope roamed beneath the sun,
Careless, until a tragedy ensued
And how freedom freed from running risk hewed
This man to a youth afraid to have fun.

Time's haste will complicate writing my plight
Called The Time Testing Tale, told outright!

BY:
A Rhyme Riddled
BRANDON
graphic novel
LUND